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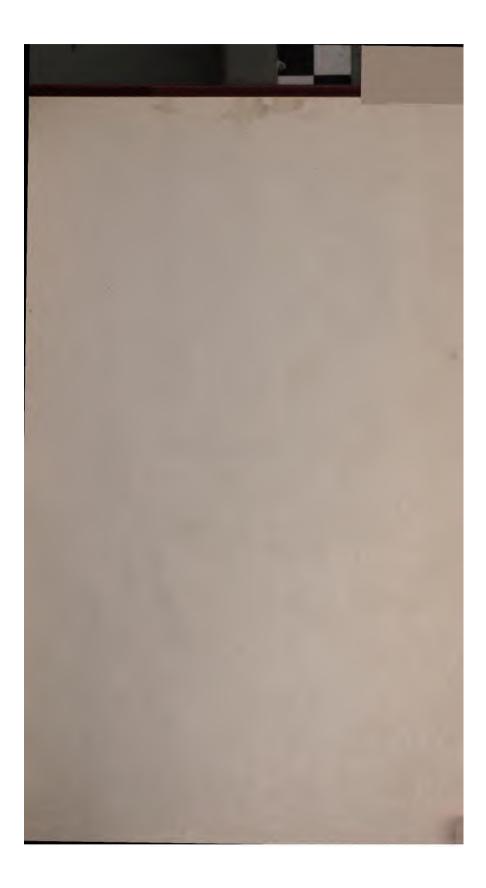
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THE SECRET OF PETRARCH

FOR LOVERS OF ITALY.

LOMBARD STUDIES.

By Countess MARTINENGO CESARESCO, Author of "Italian Characters in the Epoch of Unification."
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THE

SECRET OF PETRARCH //

275 50

BY

EDMUND JAMES MILLS

ILLUSTRATED

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IN

REVERENT AND LOVING MEMORY

OF

FRANCESCO PETRARCA

BORN AT AREZZO, JULY 20TH, 1304 DIED AT ARQUA, JULY 18TH, 1374 .

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PREFACE

In 1342, Petrarch wrote what perhaps is the most remarkable of all his works,-His Secret. takes the form of a dialogue with Saint Augustine, to whom he lays bare the inmost recesses of his heart and mind. The story of his love and ambition is told with a candour almost impossible in these days, and in a tone quite new to those days. In it we find ourselves in presence of the first man of his age, and the initiator of all modern culture. His passion for glory may have been early sated, but his love for Laura burned within him to the close of his life. It is chiefly his relation to her that, after six centuries, still appeals to us with undying interest. For those who have loved long, and those who have long mourned a personal loss, have ever found in Petrarch a colleague and consoler.

The present work consists of a prose and a poetical portion. The former comprises a series of critical studies on various questions of interest relating to Petrarch and Laura; in the latter, the viii

results of these are united in a short drama, presenting more intimately, perhaps, the true mind of the great Italian and the lady whom he loved.

The investigation was materially aided by a visit in 1901 to Avignon and other Petrarchan localities.

The text used for the *Trionfi* is that of Scartazzini; for the other *Rime*, that of Carducci and Ferrari. Some new translations of certain of the masterpieces are included, and the Italian originals of these are appended.

I can say with truth that the preparation of the illustrations has been to me a labour of love.

For valuable and very courteous assistance, my thanks are due to M. Léopold Delisle, Administrator of the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; to M. L. H. Labande, Conservator of the Bibliothèque d'Avignon; and, not least, to M. Gustave Ode, of Caumont.

E. J. M.

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PART I PROSE STUDIES

ABBREVIATIONS

Frac.—Fracassetti's edition of *Petrarch's Latin Letters*, 3 vols., Florence, 1859.

Koerting—Koerting's Petrarca's Leben und Werke, Leipzig, 1878.

De Nolhac-Pétrarque et l'Humanisme, Paris, 1892.

Ecl.—Petrarch's Latin Eclogues.

Vat.—Vatican MS. 3196.

Par.—Bibliothèque nationale, Paris. MS. 2193.

The Italian poems are indicated by sufficient of their first lines to specifically identify them. All editions of these contain indices of first lines.

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Principal.

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PART I

PROSE STUDIES

I. OF PETRARCH

Petrarch was first induced by his love for Laura to write poems in "the vulgar tongue." His conception of poetry is unknown to us, excepting as regards the Bucolics,—works of a peculiar and fanciful character, which he considered ought to be interpreted by the author only.)

Petrarch was acquainted with some of the literature of the troubadours, and may have taken his metres from them and others. But to him undoubtedly belongs the merit of having made known to us, by most varied experiment, the real capabilities of the sonnet. As Tomlinson remarks, he has amply demonstrated that there is something of great value in mere poetic form; and this is true also, though in a diminished measure, of his odes (canzoni).

A sonnet should be a dainty gem; the beautiful

presentment of a single circumstance or thought; a "moment's monument," as Rossetti terms it. It belongs, therefore, to a high order of art; and we have autographic evidence that Petrarch spared no time or pains to make his work perfect.

It is hard indeed to define poetry. Everyone will agree that it is an art of some kind; no one has yet completed the specification of the kind. Boccaccio, a younger contemporary and friend of Petrarch's, tells us that Poesis est fervor quidam exquisitè inveniendi atque dicendi seu scribendi quid inveneris; i.e., Poetry is a certain glow of exquisite discovery, and of (exquisitely) telling or writing what you discover. Assuredly the warmth and exquisiteness are to be found in Petrarch: and could there be a finer "discovery" than the character of Laura? In his case, also, the result is enhanced by a thoroughly musical nature: and by a sincerity which charms us on nearly every page. He must have comforted many who have mourned the loss of those they love. A few illustrations may suffice.

Take, for example, the lovely group of sibilants

Io penso se lassuso;

the mighty emphasis in the lines

Raro un silenzio, un solitario orrore

(of a track in a wood); or

Re del cielo, invisibile, immortale;

or

Pallida in vista, orribile e superba,

(of death).

What more terrible denunciation can be found in all literature than the memorable outburst beginning

> Fiamma dal ciel su le tue trecce piova, Malvaggia,

(against a reigning pope)?

And what more lovely specimen of tender melancholy than in his sympathetic address to the nightingale,—

Vago augeletto che cantando vai?

The air of a perfect rest in sadness has never been more exquisitely presented than in the lines

> Se lamentar augelli o verdi fronde Mover soavemente a l'aura estiva, O roco mormorar di lucide onde S' ode d'una fiorita e fresca riva, Là 'v' io seggio d'amor pensoso e scriva.

How lightsome is the touch in the opening quatrain of Onde tolse Amor! How the Rhone seems almost to flow in Rapido fiume, until the poet actually bids it halt! And here is a line for every bereaved lover,—

Piaga per allentar d'arco non sana,-

6 THE SECRET OF PETRARCH

the line that King René of Anjou took for device after his wife's death.

Or read this little group brought straight from the inner heaven,—

> Pace tranquilla senza alcuno affanno, Simile a quella che nel ciel eterna, Move dal lor inamorato riso,

(of Laura's eyes).

How well the feeling of pilgrimage is expressed in the sonnet

Solo e pensoso i piu deserti campi.

Was ever the anguish of a broken heart more genuinely told than in *Che debb' io far*,—or of elegy in *Gli occhi* and *Ite rime dolenti?* The magnificence of almost a universe is concentrated in *Conobbi*, quanto il ciel, arousing a feeling of religious awe in everyone who reads it; and the sweetness of years nestles in the rare musical cadences of *Chiare*, fresche e dolci acque.

Assuredly, Petrarch was a poet of the first rank. Had he lived long in the prime of his power, some of his less perfect work would doubtless have received the labour of the file; but this may be said of any writer. In our day, also, he would not have written Sestine; the form is too stiff, mathematical, and suggestive of a windlass.

When the Italian poems are repeatedly read,

it is surprising how many facts of various kinds are introduced which had escaped one at first sight. Almost all the secret of the poet's life lies there. Indeed, it is open to question whether even his numerous Latin letters reveal so much of the man himself as we find in his sonnets and odes.

Consider, for example, Petrarch's attitude to religion. It must be remembered that he entered the Church very young, under pressure of poverty; but, in fact, it was the only career then open to a man of taste and learning. He could so look for maintenance to sinecures which might be held by an absentee cleric who had only deacon's orders, and enjoy much leisure for literary work. He had many friends among the clergy, who vied with each other in helping him to form a library, and in other ways. And certainly the clerical tone presents itself with all due professional frequency,-whether in a letter to a friend or brother, or occasionally in a poem. On the other hand, Petrarch began the study of Latin literature long before he entered the Church, and pursued it with unexampled enthusiasm. It is to him, indeed, that we owe the revival at that time of a humanism that had practically lapsed. Another conflicting influence was the fact that he was an ardent lover.

We can see a very striking illustration of this

internal "war," as the poet termed it, in the celebrated Ode to the Virgin. The ode is a masterpiece of construction, dignity, and beauty; and if it stood alone, could only be thus regarded. Moreover, it is a presentment of the clerical influence at its highest. But, from the Lauran point of view, it is amusing. In his warmer descriptions of his lady, Petrarch calls her casta, santa, sola donna, madonna, pura, alteramente umile, Dea, stella, aspettata al regno degli Dei, Vera donna. He records her divina incredibile bellezza; expects the near approach of that happy day when he will soar into that fair calm where he can see his God and his lady; and attributes to her the seed of every good fruit he has since borne. Here the pagan lover is supremely dominant. Not much, in the way of sacred epithet, is left for the Virgin Mary; and it is clear that this was felt as a difficulty by the poet, who much disliked repeating himself, and could hardly avoid introducing some of the old and customary names.

Petrarch was soon sated with ambition. He became, at a comparatively early date, the patron of his age. We, at this distance of time, can hardly understand the competition for even a scrap of his writing; the positive worship with which his contemporaries—even a man like Prior

Nelli—regarded him; the eager desire of persons in the highest position for the honour of his residence with, or even near, them; and the passionate interest in his conversation and correspondence. It is for this reason that his long series of letters is of less autobiographical interest than we could wish. They were in fact circulars, written for the reading of a polished society; and the style is finished accordingly. Ambition, then, soon ceases to be an element in the study of Petrarch's permanent character.

Petrarch was a good friend. "Socrates,"
Lelius, Sennuccio, the good cardinal Philip, Nelli,
—to say nothing of his old peasant servants the
Monets,—are names always suggestive of delightful
and kindly intimacy.

As age advanced, his love and his friends died one by one. "Alas," he says, in a pathetic sentence, "I am almost alone." He would fain die at work. In his latest years he recurs to the early life of his heart, and writes the Triumphs,—poems we can hardly read with interest,—catalogues of classical names and allusions. But in one of them, the Triumph of Death, the opening line

Questa leggiadra e gloriosa donna

warns us that the ancient fire is rekindling; and

10 THE SECRET OF PETRARCH

the concluding septet (Pallida no—), containing the description of Laura's dying face, is equal to the finest work of the master. Through the long conflict, love was victorious at the last.

The question has sometimes been asked, Why did not Laura and Petrarch marry? The reasons are easy to find. Petrarch might no doubt have obtained a dispensation had he so wished. But he preferred celibacy, and had the general aversion to women (as "foul things") characteristic of the clergy of his age. Had he married, therefore, he must have immediately lost caste with all his friends. But if even these difficulties could have been overcome. Laura would not have consented. She was, as the poet tells us, addicted to religion from her youth; "her mind, taking no cognisance of earthly cares, was affame with the desires of heaven." She was essentially of a holy character, and the habitual companion of women in a religious order. Without being actually a nun, she was dévote. A proposal of marriage would have simply disgusted her. It will be perceived at once that, in the desire not to marry, there was an additional bond of sympathy with her lover; another would of course be found in the fact that he was by office a religious man. Subject to those conditions,

she returned his love, was pleased with it for its own sake, and not uninterested in the fame that it brought her.

After six centuries, the character of Laura stands out clear, crystalline, and without example. If Petrarch was the first man of his age, and the prime awakener of modern life, Laura is the one woman of that time to whom we turn with infinite admiration and reverence. Her half-closed eyes seem to look down upon us from the heaven which she and her mate so long desired, and surely have at last attained. Their thoughts, their sympathies, are ours. In them, sex and age have disappeared, in the indissoluble unity of a perfect rest.

FROM PETRARCH'S EPISTLE TO POSTERITY

"My body in my younger years was not "remarkable for strength, but for dexterity in "many ways. I do not boast of any excellence "of figure, beyond what might be pleasing to "those of greener years. I was of vivid com-"plexion, between fair and dusky, with lively "eyes, and a sight which remained extremely "keen for many years, and unexpectedly failed "me after my sixtieth year, so that I had re-

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"luctantly to have recourse to spectacles. Old "age came upon a body always healthy, and "surrounded it with the usual array of ailments."

Petrarch was slightly above middle height, of full face, plump hands, and in old age inclined to be stout. His diet, unless entertaining, was chiefly vegetable; and he drank very little wine. His mind was ever on the alert, and he was in bed for very few hours. This will account for the enormous amount of literary labour he accomplished; but much of it, having been destroyed by his own hands, is irremediably lost.

Petrarch went to rest on the 18th of July, and the next morning was found leaning over a book, dead. He died, as he had desired, at work. •



Dolci ire, dolci sdegni.

2. OF LAURA

(a) LAURA'S NAME

One of the earliest of Petrarch's sonnets (Quand io movo), and certainly one of the least distinguished, is of a partially acrostic character, and indicates Lauretta as the name of the poet's lady. This he abbreviated to Laura, and in all probability never again wrote the name in any other way. Both names were sufficiently in use at that time. (See, however, infrà, where the Note in Virgil is discussed.)

The surname, though not definitely disclosed, is frequently suggested by Petrarch. In his Italian verses, he so often uses the term Sole (sun) of Laura, that very little doubt can remain as to that, or some modification of it, being her family name. I have had the curiosity to count these allusions; and, excluding unmistakably allegorical instances, find them to number ninety-two.

It is possible that the full name may have been Cabassole,—the designation of an ancient and illustrious family residing in the Avignon district. Philip de Cabassole, bishop of Cavaillon, and subsequently cardinal, was an intimate friend of Petrarch, and quite au courant with the Italian love-songs. Indeed, there is a legend—the evidence for which is at present quite unknown—that he was an uncle of Laura. Petrarch, at the end of one of several extant letters to Philip, plays with his friend's name just as he habitually does with Laura's;—"Et vale mei memor ut soles, tui autem plusquam soles." (Frac. iii. 136.)

Vitalis (p. 243) argues strongly in favour of Laura being a member of the family of the Isnards de Cabassole de Cavaillon, living between Vaucluse and Lagnes. (Lagnes is a little village one sees, naked and high up on the hillside, from the road going north to Vaucluse.)

It is probable that Laura once jested with Petrarch (Amor m' ha, 7, 8) about this. Petrarch describes her chiaro nome as being one of his comforts.

(b) HER RESIDENCE.

In (Qui dove, 10, 11), after mentioning her birthplace, Petrarch records a sojourn there, and the power she has, like the mythical laurel, of calming the air and banishing the thunder. She

must, therefore, have resided at her birthplace. In (Sento, 1, 2), the poet, after returning to Vaucluse, refers to the pleasant hills and old familiar air where Laura was born, and goes on to describe the same locality as il nido in ch' ella giacque; in other words, she lived where she was born. In (Almo sol, 10, etc.) we are told she lived there from a child. That the place where Laura was born and lived was of an exceptional nature, is indicated in (Quel ch' inf, 13), and has already been referred to. There can be no doubt as to Petrarch's meaning. must have been a site remarkable for its verdure. and therefore in striking contrast with the too frequent aridity of the great plain of Avignon. Indeed, the word erba (grass) occurs twenty-seven times, and verde (green) twenty-eight times, in the Italian poems, in positions certainly descriptive of this site only; and such a site would, as a hydrographical probability, be expected at the foot of a hill.

In the French official map, one notices, immediately below the more eastern portion of the hilly ground below which Caumont lies, a tiny group of houses named Pieverde (= Green foot). The designation is clearly ancient, and apparently of Italian, not French, origin. I have no hesita-

tion in deciding on this spot as the place hallowed six centuries ago by the footsteps of Petrarch's Laura. It catches the visitor's eye at once.

The myth, initiated by de Sade, that Laura resided in Avignon, is dying hard in the hands of some surviving authorities. Not only is this myth inconsistent with the above evidence, but it can readily be refuted by additional particulars, also from Petrarch himself. For (Apollo, 13) we find her seated on the grass,-through which (Perch' al, 4, 6) and a wood he follows her. In (Benedetto, 8) and elsewhere Laura lives in a beautiful countryside, which (L'aer gravato, 32) is between two rivers, i.e. the Durance and the Sorga. summer she would sit outside on a large stone (Quella fen, 4) or take a favourite seat under a large tree (Chiare, 40). Violets abounded in their season (Mai non vo', 64; and In quella parte, 32), and there the roadside took verdure (Nova ang., 3). Various passages assure us that the air there was habitually calm (Avventuroso, 4; Lasso, 11, 15; etc.). The poet, on the other hand, in his Epistle to Posterity, speaks of Avignon as situated on the banks of that "most windy" river, - the Rhone. (Or vedi, 5) tells us how young Laura was in the habit of sitting down among the flowers

and grass and removing her shoes,-an act which was in those days sufficient to bare her feet: she seems to have reluctantly relinquished this practice. On one occasion-years after-Petrarch saw her bathing, -nude, as was the custom of the time (Nel dolce, 151; Chiare, 3). When he was at Vaucluse, Laura was near, yet far off (Di pensier, 61); and her residence was visible from high ground near Vaucluse. She herself was like a flower as she sate in the grass (Amor ed io, 9); and she was wont to go about alone (Ib., 14). The neighbourhood was richly wooded (Liete fiori, 7), and altogether a very charming country (16., 9). In the immediate vicinity was a river of very clear water (Ib., 9, and Aura che, 13) where she would bathe her face and eyes, or rinse her veil (Non al, 5). This dilettoso fiume (Mille piagge, 12) cannot be identified with the muddy waters of the Rhone or Durance, and could only have been the Sorga. The site was between two rivers (Una candida, 3, and elsewhere), generally admitted by the best authorities to have been the pair last named. It was a retreat (chiostro) shaded by pleasant hills (Stiamo, 8). The district was on the left bank of the Rhone, in a spot where the grass is piu verde and the air more serene (Rapido, 8). There were pleasant

hills (I dolci, 1) in a happy country with shaded flowery slopes (Passer, 12, 13), and a happy air (Aura che, 12) where the very vegetation smiled (Là vêr, 31). It was beneath a cool, shady, flowery, and verdant hill that Laura would sit and think or sing (Fresco, 1, 2) or walk about (Ib., 8), in short, a paradise (16., 13), not the Avignon inferno. After Laura's death, the poet frequently repeats the above characteristics- He longs to see again her tresses loosened to the breeze (Amor, se, 59, and Era si, 136). In a vision she appears to him walking over the flowers and grass just as in life, and with a pitying aspect (Quante fiate, 12, 13). From the rugged height above Vaucluse he surveys the sweet plain where she was born who held his heart in her hand both in his young and mature years (I' ho pien, 2, 3, 4). Again he wins (Gli occhi, 6) the flash of the angelic smile which was wont to make a paradise on earth; he revisits the hills which once pleased him so but now please him not, and where Love was wont to lead him (Valle che, 7, 8, and E Questo 'l). Her house was situated in a grassy, well - watered locality (Anima bella, 10, 12; Sento, 6); near young timber (Standomi, 25, 37); in a shady place (Ib., 40) beyond a wood (Ib., 51), in the country (Ib., 85) where

she wandered amid the grass and violets (Spirto felice, 6).

This long list of passages—the drift of which is absolutely unmodified by any others to be found in Petrarch—is sufficient to show that Laura could not have been a resident in the city of Avignon.

I must now notice some particulars, hitherto very inadequately considered by the commentators, as to Laura's immediate surroundings.

After Laura's death, Petrarch had an opportunity of making a pilgrimage to the place where she had lived, and where the two lovers had so often met. There he addresses her in a sonnet in which he passionately implores her pity; and concludes by begging her spirit no longer to visit her house, thus avoiding the sight of that which, among her people (ne' tuoi), displeased her. The poet is evidently hinting at some permanently disagreeable condition in Laura's abode. Again, (Mai non vo', 63) he terms her residence prigione oscura, i.e. a dark or vile prison, and (Amor, natura, 8) her life is described as faticosa e vile, i.e., in drudgery and vile (or mean). She herself is a white rose born in harsh briers (L'aura che, 'l, 5); and in a mean environment, which, a dir il ver,

was quite unworthy of her (Tacer, 6, 7). In (La notte, 34) she is made to say that death for gentle minds is the end of a prigione oscura; to others, who have cared for nothing but the mud (fango), it is a vexation. (Could the others have been the relatives with whom she lived?) Again (Ib., 163-5) she tells us that she was fairly happy in most things; but one thing always displeased her, that she was born in too mean a place. In (Mai non, 64) we learn that there were "coarse brutes" between the walls; and in (Soleasi, 2) the poet, overcome with humility, compares his heart to the low, mean place where she lived. The much discussed sonnet (Cercato) is from this point of view easily intelligible. Petrarch, writing to a friend, complains that he cannot now enjoy the solitary life he prefers, and retire from those stupid intellects (the clergy of the Avignon papal court) who have missed the way to heaven: indeed, if he could not have his own desire to live in his native Tuscany, he would like to be among the hills of Sorga once more. "But my fate," he says in a tercet, "always hostile to me, draws me back to the place where I scorn to see my treasure in the mud (fango)." The first quatrain undoubtedly refers

to Avignon; in the second, he avows his preference for the brown hills of Sorga;—but . . . if he goes thither, his ill-luck always drives him to the nasty place where he detests to see his treasure abiding. Still, he has been better off on this occasion; for Laura has shaken hands with him, and they have had an understanding.

It is clear from these passages, that Laura lived in a squalid farmhouse, probably on the clay opposite Pieverde, and was entirely out of sympathy with very unpleasant personal and other surroundings. The word "faticosa" (v. suprà) evidently indicates that she took her part of the farm work.

Some additional corroborative evidence will be given in connection with the localisation of Laura's place of death and burial.

3. OF LAURA AND PETRARCH

Petrarch states that he first saw Laura on April 6, 1327, when she was rather more than fourteen years old. He accosted her frankly, and was himself received with tender frankness. Laura was a very precocious child; and, being a keen observer, soon found that Petrarch was deeply in love. She immediately became reserved; hid her hair under her coif, and withdrew her loving expression (Lassare). either by herself or her guardians (Se co 'l, 7) verbal intercourse was prohibited; and the poor lover's complaints found vent in ink and paper (Nel dolce, 98, 99). She was his first love (Quat) pià, 65). Later on, restrictions were removed, and the two met often; for Petrarch frequently speaks of their interviews as "customary." He tells us on several occasions that the place of their meetings was near Laura's residence, in the country. They had at one time a lady-friend, who was kind to them both (perhaps Lady Rixende of Pieverde), and may have been in some sort a chaperone. In addition, Laura had

several acquaintances, with whom she sometimes took a walk, or whom she met in the ferry-boat or "diligence" of those days. It may well be that they were inmates of a neighbouring convent,—the same "sacre benedette vergine" who attended her deathbed.

When they met, her salute was that of an angel. During the prosperous period of the courtship, Petrarch would sit with his lady telling her love-stories, and others, far into the dusk (Mia benigna, 17). These we can imagine would be chiefly from classical authors, and Laura would make remarks as he went on. One of them is on record,—the legend of Tarquin and Lucretia. When it had ended, the little woman wondered why Lucretia used a dagger, and why her grief alone was not sufficient to kill her (Cara la). So pure and noble was the temperament with which Petrarch had to deal. No wonder that, in his best moments, he worshipped her as a "holy thing"

Laura's sweet voice—"that heavenly singing which undoes me so"—often whiled the time away. I do not find that they read together,—it would have been scarcely a custom in those days. But the poet was musical, and may sometimes have brought one of his lutes, for on these he was

an able performer. Laura did not care—at any rate, at first—for his poems; nor was she herself a poet (Quando giunse, 11); but her lady-friends were pleased with them,—and Petrarch was always a ladies' man. A contemporary writer gives a vivid description of these recitations; and we can almost hear the orator, gradually raising his voice as he proceeded, and with increasing sway of gesture emphasising his lines.

I think Laura did not permit Petrarch to kiss her. For there is a sonnet (Real natura) in which he describes the arrival of some important person, not now to be identified, among a company of distinguished ladies; and the visitor's selection of one of them for a kiss. Many have supposed that this lady was Laura; but the construction of the sonnet may indicate any lady. Petrarch tells us that this sweet and unusual act filled him with envy.

But there were moments when some playful liberties were allowed; e.g., he stole her glove, and had to return it. Sometimes, as he tells us in a letter, there were lovers' quarrels; and then there is one of those tender records, which reveal so much, of "brevissima verba" (the "little" language, as Swift would say) which came into use between them, and which only they two could understand.

Occasionally she would tease him for his lovesickness. When they met after a long absence, Petrarch once saw her eyelids trembling; and once, when they parted, he saw tears in her eyes. At times, when her lover was too eager, Laura would cover her face with the end of her coif, or put up her hands and often half close the beautiful dark eyes on which he was far too fond of gazing.

Petrarch's attentions, however, on one occasion became so importunate as to permanently With the absolute frankness alarm Laura. which characterised those days, and himself in particular, he leaves us no doubt as to his intention (A qualunque, 31-33; Quando giunse, 14; Non ha, 31-36; L'alma, 5-8; and Là vêr, 14). And, doubtless with reference to this matter, in the dialogue with Augustine he assures the saint that no entreaties could move her, no blandishments overcome her womanly dignity; but she remained throughout firm and unconquerable either by his or her own temperament, or, indeed, by numerous and varied incidents which might have been expected to bend a soul of adamant, a woman teaching a man the way of honour. Laura's tact was exquisite. She did not want to dismiss the man she loved, erotic and dangerous though his advances had proved to be; and, as above all things deeply imbued with a sense of religion, she desired to harmonise his mind with hers. For some time she would not see him. In a subsequent interview she scolded him indignantly for conduct unbecoming a clergyman; and long after that was on the watch for signs of another outbreak. He began to feel for her an unmeasured reverence. If, he tells us in the same dialogue, there be anywhere such a thing as truth, an effulgence of divine honour is in her face, and an exemplar of consummate propriety is in her ways; her voice and emphatic glance are of no mortal nature, and her very walk is not human. Again, in a sonnet, we hear

Basso desir non è ch' ivi sì senta, Ma d'onor, di virtute. Or, quando mai Fu per summa belta vil voglia spenta?

Laura was well worthy of such praise. In an age remarkable for sexual licence, and living only a few miles from a spot where that was unusually concentrated, her mind and heart and body kept their unsullied name. One word, or even a gesture, of assent, and two lives would have been filled throughout with a long imperishable sorrow. Calm she remained; clear, winsome, loving; but on guard to the last (*La notte*, 105). Only in her later years, when the shadow of

death began to draw a little nearer, did she feel she could somewhat trust her lover, and si fa men dura. He did well to give her a sacred place among the truly noble of the world, and enshrine in his verses her eternal memory.

But we must not leave Petrarch's own character unanalysed. His hot temperament, not unnaturally fired by so extraordinary a physical beauty, had undoubtedly overmastered him. As against this, was ever the conscious and bitter struggle of the inner heart. Over and over again does the poet make us almost spectators of the terrible conflict he had to endure. According as the victory inclined, so was the outward issue; and, in the result, we have a contradiction much more intelligible to an Italian than to an English mind. After Laura's death, he tells her (S'onesto, etc.) that she had wronged him by even supposing him to be wholly evil; but his real nature was clearly not a matter to be explained during her life.

I have said that the age was remarkable for its licence. Petrarch did not escape contamination; and this has to be dated, unfortunately, from the commencement of his love for Laura. By a liaison with an unmarried woman in Avignon he became the father of a son (subsequently

legitimised) in 1337, and of a daughter in 1343. Here again the same conflict appears between the soul of the man and his bodily temperament. He tells us he detested his life; and in his miserable letters still extant (Frac. ii. importune fores obsidet amica; Ib., iii. tædium vitæ morte pejus-ultro in laqueum redes). as well as in numerous sonnets (Io sentia, 5; Io son si, 2; Quando il, 53; Tempo era, 9-14; Tranquille, 4; Volo, 8; Pace, 11; Dolci durezze, 14; etc.), we can see that his "warfare" was at times almost unbearable. Indeed, on one occasion, he stole from Avignon at night, and hastened to Vaucluse, in order to regain once more the liberty he had lost in that "inferno." (This passage, and one or two others of like purport, prove clearly that the immediate cause of Petrarch's leaving Avignon was to escape the obsession of the "amica." Some imagine that he desired to elude Laura!)

Avignon was in Petrarch's time the seat of the papacy, and the daily events in the lives of every man of note were matters of common knowledge. The scandal of Petrarch's fatherhood could scarcely fail to reach Caumont, probably through clerical channels; and we cannot doubt that Laura would hear of it (E.g.? Arbor, 8).

To a woman of her temperament, such an event would be utterly unintelligible,—indeed loathsome. She became miserably jealous. Petrarch repeatedly records this, her ill-will, her anger, her condescension, and her contempt. He was often afraid to approach her. When he became a little bolder, and met her lady-friends without her, (Liete) he wished to know why there should be any such questions between lovers,—

Chi pon freno agli amanti o dà lor legge? and the ladies replied

Nessuno all' alma; al corpo ira ed asprezza

(none for the soul; for the body, anger and severity),—adding that they had left her in tears. After a deferred reconciliation, matters probably went smoothly again until the birth of Francesca six years later. This must have indeed exasperated Laura.

After Laura's death, Petrarch represents himself as visiting her in heaven; where she promises he shall meet her eventually se 'l desir non erra. He tells us, in a letter to Boccaccio, that his desire ceased to wander at the age of forty-six (perfectius post jubileum). At forty-eight, writing to his brother Gerard, he says, "consortium fæminæ... morte nunc gravius pertimesco." These state-

ments do not agree with that in the Epistle to Posterity (written very late in life), viz., "ad quadragesimum annum appropinquans."

It is pleasant to think that the lovers must had have many happy moments together. Nothing in Petrarch's poems is more beautiful than his description of Laura's pallor when she heard of a forthcoming absence; the smile with which she tried to conceal it; their two hearts leaping together at the sight; her downcast look; and his learning then the nature of the insight of the blest in heaven. It was a flash of the higher love. At last, both growing old together, there came a time when the poet might have reasonably expected to sit hand in hand with his lady, and either heart might have spoken with perfect freedom and without concealment. Death intervened, and took the chance away.





Rieverde.

4. THE INAMORATION

It was on Good Friday 1 (Era '/, 1) when Petrarch first succumbed to the influence of Laura's eyes; in the early period of his life (i.e. before he had attained twenty-five-Nel dolce, 1); and many years before the bathing incident (Ib., 143). The locality was a fine countryside (Benedetto, 3). It was when the year renews its youth (Gentil, 15); in a sweet place. Her golden hair was scattered to the breeze, which twisted it into a thousand pretty knots, when, like tinder, he "suddenly took fire" (Erano, 1, 2, 7, 8): Laura was walking about and talking (Ib., 9, 10). Reason was of no avail to him (Ahi, 6); it was a cruel spot (i.e. through his being wounded there). Fate took him alone, to be entrapped among the grass, where the road is green (Nova). Laura was then a young lady. Petrarch's love for her first induced him to write Italian verse

¹ Petrarch does not say Good Friday, but makes an equivalent statement. There have been various astronomical calculations as to the exact date of Christ's death. Lynn thinks it was on the seventh of April, which would agree very nearly with the supposition of Petrarch; but how the poet arrived at this result, has not been explained.

(Se'l pensier, 27). The site was where they were accustomed to meet subsequently (Chiare, 28, 30). Laura wore violets and had a green dress (In quella parte, 32). A soft air moving the white and yellow flowers on the hillside reminds the poet of the place and the first day when he saw her golden hair scattered to the breeze, and so suddenly took fire (1b., 8o). Her aspect was more than mortal (Nè cosi, 8); she lived like a wild thing (Fera, 5, 7), i.e. quite unconventionally; she spread her net for him in the grass (Amor fra, 1), between two rivers (Una candida, 3). The quiet breeze made the green leaves rustle; she scattered her hair very prettily, and then most winsomely gathered it up. But her splendid eyes were the real cause of the poet's love, and changed the whole tenor of his life (Ben mi, 54, 55). The "exact" date was 6 a.m., April 6, 1327 (Voglia, 12, 35). He was twenty-three years old, and she was about seven years younger (Anzi, 1, 8). The event happened in the morning, which thenceforth became to him the most delightful time of day (La sera, 4). It took place near to Laura's house (Anima bella, 18) in April of the year and in the April of Petrarch's life, when they first met (Tacer, 11-15); she

¹ Refer to notes at the end.

was "onesta", i.e. very "proper," in her manner (Tornami, 5) and had a loving look (L'aura mia, 6). The courtship lasted twenty-one years (Tenemmi, 1). When she took him prisoner she was a young girl, purer than a white dove. She bound him fast with words and nods (Era si pieno, 93). In (Questa leggiadra, 134) we learn that her death took place on the anniversary of the inamoration, and at the same hour of the morning.

One of Petrarch's Latin poems (Ecl. iii.), whatever other meaning it may possess, undoubtedly refers continuously to Laura (cf. infrà, The Place of her Death). In this the following passage occurs,—

Daphne, ego te solam deserto in litore primum Aspexi, . . .

i.e. Daphne, I first saw you by yourself in a lonesome spot.

All this evidence taken together (and there is no other) proves conclusively that the inamoration could neither have taken place in a church, nor in the city of Avignon, as de Sade contends; but that it happened in the country, near the very place where, as we have seen, Laura resided,—and therefore, as we learn from other Petrarchan passages, where she was born and died.

5. LAURA'S BIRTHPLACE

The evidence as to Laura's birthplace, like all the other direct evidence relating to her, comes also exclusively from Petrarch himself. His first statement respecting it (Quel ch' inf, 12) is introduced by a little disquisition on the special exaltation by Providence of very humble conditions; and he gives, as an instance of his, the birth of such a Sun (Sole) in picciol borgo, i.e. a little country town. Hence, nature herself is grateful to the place: from which it would appear, as was the fact, that it had exceptional natural features.

Subsequently (A piè), we are told that Laura was born at the foot of hills; that the poet had gone by there (Qui dove, 10) to enjoy the quiet of the Vaucluse district where Laura was born and resided; that she was born in Paradise (Chiare, 55), in the shadow of a low hill,—by pleasant hills (Sento, 2),—in too undistinguished a spot (La notte, 165),—in a pretty countryside (Ib., 168). There are no other references. We must inevitably conclude that

Laura could not have been born in a large city, — Avignon, for instance, as de Sade contends,—but in or near to a village, and where some small hill encountered a verdant plain. Neither is it conceivable that "Paradiso" could have been used by Petrarch as a description of Avignon, — a city which he often describes in terms of unmeasured detestation and contempt. The exact identification of this spot is due to Prof. Flamini (Giorn. Stor. della Lett. It., 1893, p. 355).

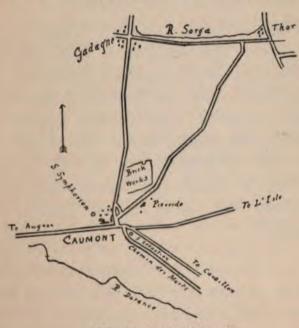
In 1483, i.e. only thirty-five years after Laura's death, and nine years after Petrarch's, Saint Francis of Paola was travelling in France. His companion as far as Tours was Francesco Galeota, a Neapolitan noble, Signor of Serpico, charged by Ferdinand of Aragon to accompany the Saint to the court of the moribund Louis xI. Galeota was an ardent humanist and poet, and an enthusiastic admirer of Petrarch. Here was an opportunity, of which he fully availed himself, for a detailed local study. In a sonnet written on this occasion, he tells us

Vignon, Comonto là dov' ella nacque, Rodano e Sorga ancor vid'io passando, e dove scrisse, e dove arse cantando il mio maestro quanto a Laura piacque.

According, then, to the earliest ascertainable local tradition, Laura was born at Caumont. No position in the Avignon district so well corresponds with the poet's indication as this. It is, and was, a little country town; and the parish, comprising at present about 1500 inhabitants, lies in a slope between two hills. We know that in Petrarch's time the district was much wooded; but the little "green spot" (Pieverde) to which Petrarch so often alludes lay, and still lies, just in front of the château of Lady Rixende, close to Caumont. (See map opposite.)

The village is about eight miles south-east of Avignon, and nine miles south-west of Sorga head (Vaucluse), with a fairly direct road to both places. It may be presumed that these roads were in existence in the fourteenth century; at any rate, Petrarch speaks of a road passing Laura's residence. The distance from Vaucluse to Avignon viâ Caumont is practically the same as viâ Thor; but the latter route has always served a more numerous population, and the former would naturally be more secluded. It is clear that Petrarch, whether at the time residing in Avignon or Vaucluse, could easily ride out, spend an afternoon or evening with his lady, and return home with the light.

In my opinion Laura was born, lived, and died at a little farmhouse on the west side of the Thor road, opposite Lady Rixende's château of Pieverde, and now marked "Brickworks" on the map (q.v.) From Caumont there is



ENVIRONS OF CAUMONT

an easy cross road to a branch of the Sorga at Châteauneuf (Gadagne); and another to the still closer Durance. Thus Caumont fulfils the condition of being situated "between two rivers."

Some very early Italian scribe introduced

into the Triumph of Death the well-known lines

Ove Sorga e Durenza in maggior vaso Congiungion le lor chiare e torbide acque,

Onde agli occhi miei quel lume nacque;

intending, of course, to indicate Avignon as the birthplace. This would be in accordance with an extremely ancient map (here reproduced from Velutello),—the only one probably known to the scribe in question, who, we may suppose, was not personally acquainted with the locality. Unfortunately for him and the map, the two embouchures are eleven miles apart. Most modern authorities have given up the passage as a forgery.

6. LAURA'S LAST ILLNESS

It is commonly supposed that Laura died of the plague which at that time (1348) was quickly traversing western Europe. The horrors of the visitation have been given in detail by Boccaccio, who witnessed them, and whose description was approved by Petrarch. It need hardly be said that the plague was contagious, and an infected person generally died on the third day after contact. The skin was disfigured, and there was much fever. So great was the social terror, that victims of all classes were deserted by their nearest and previously most affectionate relatives; and sick ladies of high position were waited on, in intimate menial offices, by almost any men who could be induced to assist them. The sense of decency suffered a most serious impairment for years afterwards.

It had always been the custom, when there was a death in a family, for the women friends to assemble at the house and mourn. This practice ceased with the plague, and was not renewed till after its departure.

In Avignon, the plague was at its highest during Lent; and in the three days preceding the Fourth Sunday, fourteen hundred persons perished. Altogether it lasted about seven months in Avignon. That city held in Petrarch's time about 80,000 inhabitants; who were, as we know, very closely packed, under conditions which it would be a compliment to call insanitary.

As usual, we must take Petrarch's authority for our facts. Laura's illness was a matter of gradual approach (Standomi, 9). She occasionally suffered in her eyes,2 but her body had lost much of its pristine vigour crebris perturbationibus, i.e. by frequent "perturbations" (Aug. Dial.), which on more than one occasion aroused the poet's most serious anxiety (cf. La notte Her eyes were the first to give way (Vidi fra, 12). She accepted death fearlessly, and had no pain whatever (Questa, 69); for some time she lay alone, in happiness and silence (Ib., 122, and Standomi, 71). There were feverish symtoms for a few nights (Questa 1, 127); but she retained her wonted manner to the end, and death could set no bitterness on her sweet face (Non puo, 1). A number of her lady-friends who lived near were present. These were perhaps nuns (Questa l, 23), - the sacre benedette virgine of (Quando ad, 127, 128). It was a gentle death, resembling the languishment of a cut flower (Standomi, 70), or of a clear, soft flame whose fuel is exhausted little by little (Questa l, 70), and was exceptionally sweet and placid in character (La notte che, 71, 72). Death, on her lovely face, seemed lovely too (Ib., 172). No hostile demon dared to approach with a louring look. The end came quickly at the last:—in one morning (Rotta, 13), suddenly (Poi che la, 2; Discolorato, 5; Tempo, 6; Tranquillo, 8; Leniter avulsam (Ecl. x.);—at 6 a.m., April 6th, 1348,—the exact anniversary of the inamoration.

Petrarch's account is absolutely inconsistent with the theory that Laura died of the plague.

In (Standomi) reference is made to the appalling easterly hurricanes which at that time swept over Europe; and one of these (vi repentinæ tempestatis, as Petrarch says) was doubtless the immediate cause of death. In short, an already enfeebled constitution failed through sudden chill.

The frequent "perturbations" would seem to refer very definitely to periodic hæmorrhage attendant on uterine fibroma. This disorder could not, in the condition of medical knowledge at that time, be in any way diagnosed; but it would undoubtedly act as a natural bar to marriage.

There would not necessarily be great emaciation; but the accompanying anæmia may have produced Laura's intense whiteness at the time of death. According to Spencer (Trans. Obs. Soc. Lond., xl.), uterine fibroma is rare in northern Europe before the age of twenty-five, and very rare before twenty; and "there is no satisfactory record of its occurrence before the age of puberty." Assuming Laura to have died at thirty-seven, she may have suffered from this disorder for seventeen years. Naturally,—as was in fact the case,—her beauty would be much impaired. Petrarch says she began to age early.

7. THE PLACE OF LAURA'S DEATH AND BURIAL

Like most deeply smitten lovers, Petrarch imagined that he should die an early death. In (Chiare, iii.), he thinks the time will perhaps come when that untamed creature (fera) will return to the place where they used to meet (which, as we have already seen, was in the country, and which was the site of the inamoration) and take pity on him when she finds him there "now dust beneath the stones." For him, no grave could have a more restful locality (16., 25); and he would naturally wish to be buried near where he would expect Laura herself to be buried. After her death, he describes a visit to the neighbourhood in which she lived, using his customary terms of indication; and goes on to say (Valle che, 13, 14) that it was from this spot she ascended to heaven, leaving on earth "her lovely cast-off dress." She must, therefore, have died where she was born and lived. In another visit to her "nest" (Sento, 14) he bewails her cenere sparse, and would fain be buried there. Again, (È questo 'l, 10-14) he

returns to the place which, now consecrated by here he honours and worships; "a dark night no falling on those hills whence you took your later thight to heaven, and where your eyes were wor to make the day." From (Standomi, 61, 70) we learn that Laura died among flowers and grass, i.e. where she always lived.

According to de Sade, Laura was buried in Avignon, in the Church of the Cordeliers (Fratres minores), beneath a handsome monument.* Ioudou (Essai sur l'histoire d'Avignon, Avignon, 1853, p. 416) describes the structure as a "grande et belle église": it had a number of chapels, in one of which several members of the de Sade family (de Sade states), and Laura herself, were interred. Let us see how Petrarch's statements tally with these speculations. The list is a short one, and may be considered in its entirety. Alas! the first mention of Laura's tomb describes it as "a few stones"—pochi sassi—(Quel sol, 3); in the next (Or hai, 4) it is a petty grave (poca fossa); later on (Solea da la, 47) a "little earth lies upon my happiness"; and lastly, it is in an obscure and mean place (Ite, rime, 4; and Ecl. xi.,—obscuro humo). In short, she was buried in the immediate vicinity of the spot where she was born, lived and died. Her home surroundings were, as we have

seen, poor and lowly; and she was interred in a grave whose character befitted them.

It will be convenient to deal in this place with the passage in Petrarch's eleventh Eclogue, where the burial-place of Laura (Galatea) is generally admitted to be described:—

Carpe iter hac, qua nodosis impexa capistris
Colla boum, crebrasque canum sub limine parvo
Videris excubias, gilvosque ad claustra molossos.
Ille locus tua damna tegit; jamque aspice contra,
Hic Galatea sita est, qua nil natura creavit
Pulchrius in terris

The literal translation is,—"Come hither, where you will see the uncombed necks of oxen with knotted halters, and the frequent watch of the dogs beneath the little entrance, and the yellow mastiffs at the gate. That is the place which covers your loss. And now look the opposite way; here is laid Galatea, than whom nature created nothing fairer on earth."

As regards the intention of this extract, we must remember that Petrarch has expressly stated his Eclogues to have a veiled meaning, and to be not necessarily intelligible without an explanation. Specimens of such explanation are extant. But, in order to provide some general assistance for his readers, he compiled a series of *Epytomata*

(=arguments), one for each Eclogue: transcriptions of them all (not verbatim copies), in which Petrarch is spoken of in the third person, are to be found in Hortis (Scritti inediti, p. 359 et seg.), and indicate a great range of subjects, in the guise of pastoral allegory. When these works became known, there was a general desire for a more detailed explanation; and two friends of the poet, viz., Benvenuto da Imola and Donato degli Albanzani, undertook the difficult and rather delicate task of procuring it. Of the two, Donato held the more intimate relationship, and was a littérateur of some position. Both of them wrote commentaries on the Eclogues; and these exhibit important differences,-Donato being always more trustworthy than his colleague. Indeed, the reputation of Benvenuto for exactness has almost vanished of late years.

We must consider for a moment the third Eclogue, which is a conversation between Stupeus (Petrarch) and Daphne. The poet's own argument says nothing about a double meaning for Daphne; and Benvenuto, having evidently elicited nothing from Petrarch on the subject, does not admit any reference to Laura. Both authors were, in fact, very much afraid of the old man. Donato, however, having with much cautious gentleness

suggested that Daphne must surely refer also to Laura personally, "did not displease" him; but Petrarch left him to fill in the details by himself. (Among these is the curious statement that Laura was a very rich woman! Petrarch gives a long and minute explanation of Eclogue v., which differs altogether from that of his two friends.) I attribute much importance to these facts, because they show that the poet's obvious meaning may be the correct one, whether contained in an argument or not.

We may now return to Eclogue xi. Here the argument gives a direct statement that Galatea is illa cara domina de qua in egloga proxime precedente mentionem fecit,-in fact, Laura, Donato and Benvenuto proceed, in substantial agreement, to give their own explanation of the passage Carpe iter, etc. I say "their own," because neither of them asserts (as he would have been only too proud to do, had it been the case) that he had it from Petrarch himself; and it may have been proposed by one of them and accepted by the other. Benvenuto's romance is as follows (literal translation): - "Carpe, answers Fusca, and means let us go farther on; come hither where you shall see Colla boum nodata capistris, that is, the necks of the Minorite brothers, who bear the yoke of obedience, labour and religion; impexa,

because the crown of the head is shaven; and they bear knotted halters, that is, their own girdles; and where you shall see frequent watchings, vigils of dogs, i.e. preachers; and beneath this small entrance where you shall see yellow mastiffs, that is, the brothers of ashen hue: and this place holds the body of your Lauretta: therefore look opposite, here is Lauretta the friend of Petrarch, than whom nature created nothing fairer." (Donato always writes Laurea for Laura, and says he copied the arguments from Petrarch's own autograph. The accuracy of this spelling is open to question; for the anonymous codex, referred to by Hortis as always the more exact. invariably reads Lauretta for Donato's Laurea. There are many corruptions in all the codices.)

According, then, to Benvenuto, colla is a word equally applicable to necks and crowns of the head; and, as Woodhouselee observed, dogs and oxen equally mean Minorite clergy. I may point out another slip. How is the small entrance to be reconciled with the grande et belle église of the Cordeliers, which de Sade himself, in a moment of forgetfulness, assures us had a grande porte?

The explanation is a betise.

Why not take the extract in its natural sense? As we have seen, Petrarch himself tells us that

the conditions in which Laura lived were mean, and even disgusting. In (Mai non, 65) we had already been told of the "coarse brutes" within the walls; and the poet had doubtless seen them often enough, and received the undesirable attentions of the dogs. Taking all the evidence together, we can have little doubt that Laura's residence was a poor farmhouse of the fourteenth century. Donato and Benvenuto wrote in Italy, and had probably never been in Provence.

Thus it would seem reasonably certain that Laura was buried on the opposite side (contra) of the road near which she lived, and in the immediate vicinity of the little chapel of St. Sebastien, where there were very numerous burials at that time. So many bones have been dug up there, that the little road has been long known as the Chemin des morts. Somewhat later than Laura's death, chapels to St. Sebastien were built in several parts of eastern Italy as against the plague. The Caumont structure may have been erected then.

Several of Petrarch's poems commemorate anniversaries of Laura's death. In the year when it occurred, there is in a very private journal of his (Par., 2193) an entry dated May 1348, beginning "alas" and ending "alas, alas," doubtless referring to the loss of Laura in the preceding month.

8. LAURA'S PERSONALITY

Petrarch tells us (Anzi tre) that Laura was about seven years younger than himself. As we have seen, she was born, lived, and died in the country. She was of ancient, indeed noble lineage. The poet's knowledge of her dated from a period when she was somewhat over fourteen years of age. She was a precocious child; having wisdom, thoughtfulness, intelligence, and modesty much beyond her years. Petrarch calls her "donna" even when young. Her skin was exquisitely white, and her cheeks had the tender red of roses "plucked by virgin hands." But the first characteristics of her to attract attention were the magnitude and astonishing brilliancy of her eyes, to which the inamoration seems to have been primarily due; and Petrarch ceaselessly refers to them. He several times records their black colour; and on one occasion applies the term "zapphiro" to them,which the commentators consider refers merely to their purity. The eyelashes were black. When in conversation with him, her eyes were often downcast, half-closed, and charmingly demure (umile).

Her hair was of a golden tint. In her younger years it hung down and was blown about by the breeze; and later on, it was bound up with fillets or ties, which may have borne gems on holidays. Her smile was angelic, and apt to come in a flash, showing her pearly teeth. She had a fine mouth. Her hands were white and small, the nails like ivory, and the fingers shapely. Her fête garments were of purple or green cloth, decorated with natural flowers and (perhaps) pearls, which were then going out of fashion. But she herself thought equally little of gold, rubies, pearls, and gentle birth; and considered beauty to be a disgusting thing, if not associated with personal chastity. She was frequently coifed. She had handsome gloves, but did not as a rule wear them; Petrarch stole one of them. In her younger days, she was of a "divine incredible" beauty; but gradually lost much of this, mainly in consequence of her illnesses and always delicate health as she grew older. Her salute was very gracious; her conversation apt, intellectual, sparkling at times, and at times dignified and reserved. She sung very fascinatingly, and had ever a very sweet voice. She did not walk like ordinary mortals, but glided as angels do. Her coy and dainty manner was distinguished by a general serenity, and her

temperament was happy. She had a fearless winsomeness, which turned heavenward the thoughts of her lover; indeed, was of a religious disposition from her early years. She swayed Petrarch with a little nod; at times made sport of his misery; and at times found it necessary to be very haughty to him, not to say angry. Even when she was a child, she would only be influenced by him in her own way. Nevertheless, much jealousy, tears, sighs, blushes, little confidences, and something that no other eyes than her lover's saw, are recorded.

Laura was much in the habit of walking out alone,—sometimes as far as the Sorga; here she did not disdain on occasion to wash her coif, and was once found by the poet in the condition of Diana when taken unawares by Actæon. It was delightful to her to saunter or sit on the grass, also alone, with bare feet, and think or sing. We may infer that she was very independent of, and out of sympathy with, the persons with whom she lived,—her legendary aunts.

As regards society, Laura does not seem to have cultivated it much, especially as she had no wish for marriage. But she had a number of friends in the vicinity,—probably nuns, or ladies in training with them. Petrarch mentions having

seen her in a boat (presumably the Bonpas ferry), and in some sort of carriage, with a party of them; he also suggests that they took walks together. She was readily distinguishable from the others, and they greatly admired her. If in male society, she treated all men alike.

The ancient church of St. Symphorien must have been attended by Laura.

Laura's manner of life was humble and uneventful (umile e quieta); self-involved and retired (in se raccolta e si romita); so out of the way (coverta) that it was scarcely encountered by the gadding crowd (mondo errante). Assuredly she cannot be identified with Valori's lady of the Court of Love.

Laura was well known to Sennuccio, who may have been the experienced old lover who gave to Petrarch and her the famous two roses. Whether "Socrates" and Lelius—two other intimate friends of Petrarch—were equally well acquainted with her, is open to some question. Colonna, writing on one occasion from Avignon to Petrarch, accused him of being in love with an altogether fictitious personage (Frac. i. 124); so that she could not possibly have been known to Avignon society.

Petrarch's Italian verses were widely circulated, and even sung in the streets; and thus Laura's

name became very celebrated, even during her life. She was for a long time indifferent to them herself, but afterwards expressed a pleasure in them. Her nationality must clearly have been Italian. Petrarch did not speak French.

Laura's portrait was painted or sketched by Simon Memmi, at Petrarch's request, and accompanied him in all his wanderings. The one reproduced in this volume is the Uffizi portrait. Nothing is known of its history; but it faithfully represents the demure, haughty, disdainful lady of Petrarch's Canzoniere. Its genuineness is attested by the obvious marks which it bears of her illness and later maturity.

9. THE QUESTION OF LAURA'S MARRIAGE

Whether Laura was or was not married, is a question upon which there has been much debate, and is necessarily of the greatest importance as regards the true interpretation of her own character and Petrarch's. As soon as traditions about her began to take definite shape, she was very naturally assigned to some distinguished Avignon family,—indeed, alleged to be a daughter of Paul de Sade. This tradition was reaffirmed in a letter (Feb. 1, 1647) from Suarez, bishop of Vaison, to Tomasini, bishop of Cittanova; where it is traced to Vasquinus, and afterwards described as being supported by various authors. The lady appears to have been unmarried.

Velutello, who made an investigation at Avignon before the year 1520, had an interview there with Gabriel, a very old member of the de Sade family, who mentioned to him the same Laura as having been Petrarch's love. But Velutello soon found that she lived far too long, and died far too late, for the Laura of the sonnets. Having been misled by some very doubtful hear-say evidence, he made another identification (at Cabrières), now universally admitted to have been erroneous.

There have been numerous other identifications. Vitalis, for example, thinks Laura was a connection of the Isnard de Cabassole family. Valori infers that she was a cousin on the mother's side of Laura, Lady de Sade, belonged to an Avignon family of the name of St. Laurent, and was one of the ladies of the Court of Love there. Valori's Laura was an orphan and unmarried, and an ancestral connection of his own.

None of the identifications agree with the summaries I have given of Petrarch's own statements as to the facts of his Laura's birth, residence, and mode of life. What we have mainly to consider is the very commonly received hypothesis of de Sade, and how far those statements support or contradict it.

De Sade's great work on Petrarch is a monument of scholarly skill and patient erudition, and must always be necessarily consulted in relation to Petrarchan history. Unfortunately, it has some serious blemishes; and, where the author's personal interests are concerned, we cannot fail to

perceive that he has no scruples in making biassed mistranslations, suppressing evidence, and depending on the support of very obvious imposture. For a personal interest it is. Desirous of establishing his descent from Petrarch's Laura, he has of course to make out the fact of her marriage. His allegations are, that she was Laura de Noves, near Avignon, and married at the age of eighteen years to Hugo de Sade, who resided there; that she had by him eleven children, nine of whom survived her; that she died of the plague, on the day specified by Petrarch; and was buried the same evening in a family tomb at Avignon, and under a monument belonging to her surviving husband.

We have already seen that she neither died of the plague, nor was buried as de Sade asserts, nor lived in Avignon. It remains to collect together Petrarch's own statements as evidence of her marital condition.

In the first place, some reference must be made to the terms *mulier* and *donna*, employed by Petrarch, for there are still to be found serious writers who imagine that these words connote marriage. In a well-known passage, Petrarch writes

Est mihi post animi mulier charissima tergum, . . .

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admittedly meaning Laura. But the term mulier, in Latin, simply implies a grown woman, whether married or not; Cicero indeed speaks of virgo aut mulier. Petrarch himself, (Frac. ii. 72) when extolling some famous women, says that there are some very noteworthy accounts of certain battles in which the Carthaginians, Lacedemonians, Teutons, and Cimbri were concerned, and in which the women (mulieres) behaved with much more spirit than the men. Surely these women could not all have been married; one would rather suppose they would be likely to be all virgins, and the married women home-stayers. But another instance, hitherto quite overlooked, is perfectly conclusive. In (Frac. i. 262) Petrarch, writing to John Colonna, describes a most remarkable woman (mulier), Maria of Puteoli; and goes on to say that she had the singular glory of a conserved virginity (servatæ virginitatis). The lady was of a military, rather than of a virgin type (militare quam virgineum); and no one had ever, in jest or earnest, attempted the virginity (virginitas) of that unbending woman (rigidæ mulieris). The fame of the woman (mulieris) came to be known.

It is clear that de Sade's argument — that Laura must have been married because Petrarch called her *mulier*—is by no one better refuted than by Petrarch himself.

So with the equivalent term "donna." Petrarch mentions Laura as donna from the first (Era 'l giorno, 4, and Quel ch' inf., 14); the former passage referring to the inamoration, and the latter to the time of her birth. He also terms her Madonna, -which is otherwise surely a wellknown appellation of the Virgin Mary. In (Giovane, 1) she is giovane donna; in (Or vedi, 1) giovenetta donna; and in (In quella, 22), more strictly, la bella giovenetta ch' ora e donna;-i.e. the pretty girl who is now a grown woman. Numerous similar examples might be quoted. In Italian, the word donna is applicable to almost any woman; e.g., donna di camera is a lady's maid. Thus the word has in itself no implication of marriage; and, as has been shown, is sometimes used by Petrarch without its more usual reference to age. All this must have been perfectly well known to de Sade; who nevertheless contends that "donna" means a married woman.

Not so, however, with the term giovenetta, which always means a girl, with the implication of maidenhood. As to Laura's younger years, it is admitted that Petrarch's use of it can in

that aspect have no other meaning. But, in a colloquial sense, like the word "girl" in English, it is used by Petrarch for a woman of mature years. There are two examples of this, which I take from the Triumphs,-poems written during the last years of the author's life, and when his advanced age would naturally not correct the impression of comparative youthfulness which Laura finally left on his mind. In the Triumph of Love (Era si pieno, 93) Petrarch, describing his capture, says that a giovenetta, purer than a white dove, effected it, and then, without changing the term to donna, goes on to state that he was bound fast by words and nods (i.e. conversation and gestures of command). The latter can only refer to Laura as no longer a very young person. The inference is, that she remained a maiden.

Again, in the Triumph of Death (La notte, 93), Petrarch sees Laura in a vision, and converses with her. She reminds him of the severity with which she was obliged to check his too passionate advances, which, as we know, rendered her shy of him until nearly the time of her death; and then adds

. . . a salvar te e me, null' altra via Era alla nostra giovenetta fama;—

to save thee and me, there was no other

way for our youthful fame. The term giovenetta, therefore, is here carried on over the whole of Laura's life; and the word nostra can only imply that she was no more married than Petrarch himself.

Another expression which Petrarch has applied to Laura, I find at least forty-eight times, with or without grammatical transformation, in the Italian poems. This is the word onestate. In its primary sense, it means "proper" = worthy conduct; and specifically when applied to a woman, connotes chastity. In Petrarch's hands, it sometimes indicates innocence and reserve. The term, of course, might very well apply to a married woman of exceptionally fine character; but how many married women would like it to be used so many times over? Much the same remark may be made of casta (chaste) which (in variants) appears ten times; and of pudica (modest), which is noticed twice. (Exemplar pudicitiæ is to be found in Eclogue xi.) But there is yet another term of still more noteworthy import,-santa, var., (holy), which I find twenty times. Doubtless it is very possible for a married woman to lead a holy life; but there is a certain propriety in the use of words. Is it conceivable that Petrarch would have written

santa of a wife, and, as de Sade alleges, the mother of eleven children?

I must now pass in review some other passages which have a more or less direct bearing on the question at issue. In (Qual più, 6, 15) Petrarch compares himself to the phænix, which he says is senza consorte, i.e. has no mate.

In (E questo 'l, 1) he gives the same name as a permanence of Laura; and repeats the expression elsewhere. She, therefore, could have had no mate.

Again, long after his first acquaintance with Laura, he calls her a pure white dove (Giunto, 5); she has chaste beauty in a heavenly body (Amor con la, 10); and he adores her with respectful prayers, as he would a holy thing (Ib., 14). They had a mutual lady-friend who at one time took pity on them (Mira, 2). These things would not have been said of a married woman.

The sonnet (Chi vuol, 4-8) shows how death takes the best and leaves the worst; such will be the case with this beautiful mortal (Laura), whose look is turned towards the Kingdom of God. If, during his absence, God has really taken her away and made of her a star (I pur, 7, 8), then all is over with Petrarch's loving troubles. No pity is expressed for the (imaginary) widower and family. In fact, it is her habit to look towards

and to desire heaven (Qual donna, 8); and she led the life of an angel (Che debb'io, 7, 8). When she reached heaven, she sighed only for her lover (Ib., 72,), and maybe grieved for him (Occhi miei, 4). In spirit he gladly follows her (Nell eta, 11, 14), now three years dead. Indeed, she calls him to her (Mai non fu, 12); and from her heavenly retreat looking upon his miserable exile, turns towards him in her wonted manner, but with double pity (Ne mai, 7, 8). Thence the soft wind of her sighs reaches him, and he hears her chaste allurements (Se quell, 1, 10). That lofty soul calls him, dumb, weary, by the way she went (Sio avessi, 13, 14).

The above later extracts—which I may term the "heavenly" passages—have a meaning not to be gainsaid. But the climax is reached in (*Levommi*), where the poet represents his glorified love taking him by the hand, and telling him that he shall yet be with her if his desire does not wander. She goes on to say

Te solo aspetto, e quel che tanto amasti, E laggiuso e rimaso, il mio bel velo.

I.e., Thee only do I look for, and that which thou didst love so much, a remnant there below, my beautiful veil. She awaits none but her lover and her beautiful body. Her husband, still alive,

and her nine surviving children,—for these she has no pity, no desire. Are these the thoughts of an always deeply religious woman now in heaven, or consistent with the good taste (not to say the belief) of the cleric who wrote them? Could any language be more decisive as to the fact that she died, as she had lived, unmarried and childless?

This result is confirmed—indeed, enhanced—by numerous other intimations to the same effect; and the poet repeatedly hopes to meet Laura in heaven,—presumably without a rival,—dearer to him than ever (Quando il, 65), and never to be divided from him (Ib., 89).

All these passages are utterly inconsistent with de Sade's contention that Laura was a wife and a mother; and there are none of an opposite import.

Before leaving the Italian poems, I must notice two sonnets (Liete and L'aura serena) which have puzzled many commentators, and are supposed to furnish direct evidence of the existence of a husband, or at least of some person in a position of authority over Laura. (Liete) is addressed to certain ladies whom the poet met when they were out for a walk. The ladies, he says, are happy, yet sad; companioned, yet alone; and they

were discussing something when they met him. He asks them, Where is my life? Where is my death? Why is she not with you as usual? They reply, that they are glad through recollecting their Sun; sorrowful for want of her sweet company.

La qual ne toglie invidia e gelosia,-

i.e. which ill-will and jealousy take away.

And again (L'aura serena) the poet, feeling the gentle wind strike his face, and hearing the leaves rustle, thinks once more of the first wounds he received at the hands of Love .-

> E 'l bel viso veder, ch' altri m'asconde, Che sdegno o gelosia celato tiemme,-

i.e., and sees the beautiful face which other (feelings) hide from me; which disdain jealousy keep hidden from me.

In Vat. 3196, of which an exquisite photographic facsimile is in my possession, we have the autographic original of the latter sonnet, with the poet's own variations. These are as follows :-

E veggio quel che gelosia nasconde

al. E veder quel che talor mi s'asconde

vel. E veder quel che si spesso s'asconde

E veder quel che spesso altri m'asconde

O disdegno amoroso chiaso tienme.

Finally, he settled on the textual reading, with 5

the usual remark, This pleases me best (Hoc per placet). Thus the disdain was disdegno amoroso, i.e. Laura's own; and the gelosia accompanied it. The phrase s'asconde, twice repeated, shows that Laura hid herself from her lover, and was not forced to do so by another person. There is a similar use of s'asconde in (Far potess 'io, 3). The explanation of (Liete) of course goes with this. No jealous husband has anything to do with the matter. The term "altri" implies that Laura was "quite another woman," as we say, through jealousy.

It is true that some have tried to make capital out of the line (Liete, 9)

Chi pon freno agli amanti o dà lor legge?

i.e., Who puts a bridle on lovers or gives them laws? But the *chi* is perfectly general in its meaning, and nearly equal to *che*,—a not unprecedented usage in Petrarch. Cf., for instance, (Quel vago, 14)—

Chi m'allontana il mio fedele amicc?

and (Dolce mio, 7)-

e chi 'l retarda?

Pur lassu non alberga ira nè sdegno.

In truth, Petrarch over and over again, in unmistakable terms, attributes ira, sdegno, invidia,

and gelosia to Laura. If it be asked, Why should she treat thus severely the man whom she loved? There can only be one answer. To say nothing of his importunities to herself, Petrarch was the father of two illegitimate children, born several years apart; Laura was a woman with a supreme religious tendency, and strong virginal feelings (Cara, 9). One can understand that the sonnets in question must have been written on some occasion of very serious rupture with Laura, probably on these grounds.

One might, perhaps, be disposed to inquire whether a jealous husband would have permitted an intercourse lasting twenty-one years to go on until it became celebrated, and so continue; and whether a pensive lady, fond of solitary walks and solitary rests in the open air, was precisely the mother of his eleven children.

A very brief consideration of the Latin works will suffice. The third Eclogue refers to Stupeus (Petrarch) and Daphne (Laura). Stupeus decribes himself as looking towards the "virgin shade" of a green laurel. The poem is certainly not restricted to Laura's early years. Daphne was a virgin.

In the imaginary dialogue with St. Augustin (3rd day) the poet uses as to Laura this emphatic

language,—cujus mens terrenarum nescia curarum celestibus desideriis ardet (i.e., Whose mind, knowing nothing of earthly cares, is on fire with heavenly desires). This is not a description of a married woman with a large family.

In Eclogue xi., a cult is announced for the dead Laura; and the poet proceeds to say

Virgineos addam cœtus,-

surely a very inappropriate accessory for a wife.

De Sade adduces the contract of marriage of a certain Laura with Hugo de Sade: the will of Paul de Sade, in which the same Laura is referred to: and, lastly, the testament of the same Laura. These were all of them legal documents, and must be supposed to give the true spelling and natal name of the lady referred to. Consequently she cannot be identified with Petrarch's Laura, whose birth-name was Lauretta, altered only by the poet himself. Both names were then in independent use as Christian names.

But criticism of de Sade is practically criticism of interested romance. If one had less acquaintance with the conservatism and ignorance of mankind, one might wonder that any of his legends survive.

10. THE NOTE IN VIRGIL

From his early days Petrarch carried with him a copy of Virgil; and in this there were certain grouped notes recording, with comments, the deaths of several friends and of his son John. These were discovered in the year 1795. At a much earlier date,—indeed, soon after Petrarch's death,—another Note had been found, referring to the death of Laura (see Appendix for the original text). The authenticity of this Note has been a matter of dispute on various grounds. Of these the following are the most important:—

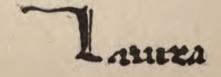
The first word in the Note is Laurea. A student of the Italian poems is at once struck by this peculiar spelling, which only occurs once in them (Dodici, 10), of Laura—otherwise meaning always a laurel tree; and not even then, if the Aldine version of 1501 be correct. Mestica, commenting on this spelling, points out that the poet was, so to speak, driven into a corner vi compositionis; and that this latinised form is a result of the compulsory situation.

This spelling has often been considered

authentic because, in a letter to James Colonna (Frac. i. 124), the poet defends himself from a charge, made by his correspondent, of loving an entirely imaginary "Laurea." Naturally, in his answer, he uses the same spelling; but this does not make it Petrarch's own.

Another argument in favour of this spelling is, that Donato and Benvenuto, in transcribing the original headings of Petrarch's Eclogue, agree in writing Laurea and not Laura. It is, however, highly probable that Benvenuto's information was obtained from Donato; in which case the agreement has no weight. Hortis, who has examined the several codices, reports that there is a third (termed by him "anonymous") which is in general much more correct than either; and this reads Lauretta where the other two read Laurea. Also, all the codices exhibit a number of inaccuracies. This argument, therefore, must be abandoned; we must take the word on its own merits, and as of no certain precedent whatever.

I reproduce here, photographically, the word in question, enlarged four times:—



It will be noticed that the word begins with an ornamental L. Petrarch himself undoubtedly drew highly ornamental capitals, when writing set manuscript intended for varied perusal. But this manuscript purports to be for himself alone (oculis meis); and therefore is most fairly compared with other manuscript of the same nature.

I have selected Vat. 3196, which contains a considerable number of the Italian poems, with corrections and comments, written in almost all the varied hands of the master. The autographic dates range from 1336 to at least 1369 (the Note should be of 1348); and there are twenty pages of satisfactorily decipherable matter. It is easy to make out seventy-three L's; and not one of these has the ornamental character of the capital letter in the Note. In addition, seven other l's of the Note, not capitals, have been ornamented: this was not Petrarch's habit anywhere.

Next, as regards the e in Laurea. This by no means attracts attention at once. Indeed, it is a striking proof of the weakness of all expert discussion of handwriting, that the e remained undiscovered until Marsand's time. If we have recourse to the MS. just referred to, we shall find that Petrarch's use for many words (Laurea does not occur) was evidently to run the r into the e, as

in the Note; but wherever the handwriting is approximately as good as in the Note, the e is much more distinct, *i.e.* with a greater tendency to separation. The junction of an r with an e was of course not a peculiarity of Petrarch.

Finally, we naturally ask the question, If Petrarch were really the author of the Note, what possible reason could he have for writing Laurea, when Laura, his habitual spelling, would have done equally well? Every expert, indeed, up to Marsand's time, must be held as having sanctioned the latter, natural spelling.

Again, in the Note, the a's are very uniform and upright; forty-nine can be readily made out. In the Vat. MS. 3196, taking various dates and fairly good writing, Petrarch cannot keep them so, so long together. He generally begins a page with the stem leaning a little to the left; and this tendency increases until the slope is very strongly defined indeed. Such a characteristic is what we should expect in a decidedly impatient writer.

So with the letter p. Petrarch, in his younger years, wrote on the whole with more deliberation than in advanced life. It is common to find, in his early calligraphy, the upper part of the body of the p close to the stem. But later on, one observes that this habit is not maintained; as the page proceeds,

the letter opens, and the body breaks away at the upper joint. De Nolhac's specimens show this well; and the Vat. MS. is quite in accordance with them. Now, in the Note, all the p's are deliberately closed up.

Similarly, the Note shows in all but one instance the lower loops of the s's closed up, which is not the case in de Nolhac's specimens.

Another basis of criticism is the other Notes already referred to as having been discovered later. Only two of these, the first and second, are fairly admissible on the ground of date (1349). In these the small six is of the Greek type σ ; and the word vesperam (s) is written vespram (s); but in the Note under discussion, the six is written in Roman character, and vesperam appears as vesperā. In Vat. 3196, the word is strongly contracted throughout. In the second of the short Notes, mensis is written much like \overline{m} b; but in the Note it is written msis, followed by mese.

The rest of the handwriting and spelling do not offer any peculiarities of sufficient value to use as tests. According, then, to the above investigation, the Note cannot be assigned to Petrarch.

It may, however, be contended that handwriting is a matter in which the gravest mistakes have been made, even by experts; and that no final

conclusion ought to be based upon it, unless there is strong confirmatory evidence of a different kind. This we must now examine.

(1) "propriis virtutibus illustris et meis longum celebrata carminibus." In the poetical epistle to James Colonna occur the well-known lines

Est mihi post animi mulier charissima tergum, Et virtute suis . . . nota . . . Carminibusque ornata meis . . .

These are practically identical with the expression in the Note. Now, Petrarch expressly says that he made a point of never repeating himself.

- (2) "primum oculis meis apparuit . . . in ceclesia sancte clare" = i.e., the poet first saw Laura in the church of Santa Clara at Avignon. If the reader will refer to a previous article (The Inamoration) he will find a body of evidence given by Petrarch himself, and which it is impossible to gainsay, that the poet first saw her, at 6 a.m. "exactly," in a place where the breeze blew her hair into knots, and where she was walking and talking. I have not yet heard of a church answering this description.
- (3) "fati mei nescius," i.e., he was ignorant of her death till Ludwig's letter brought him a "rumour" afterwards. But in (La notte, 7) the

poet informs us that, during the night that followed on that horrible blow, Laura appeared to him in a vision; conversed with him, and informed him of her death. Similar apparitions are recorded (Solea lontana and O misera) some years before, during Laura's life, and when they were at a great distance from each other. Now it must be remembered that Petrarch had had two verified instances of other persons appearing to him, and making announcements of death; so that there can be no doubt he intended himself to be taken seriously. The Note, therefore, must be in error.

(4) "in locum fratrum minorum," i.e., she was buried in the cemetery of the Minorite Brothers (Franciscans, Cordeliers). De Sade would have us believe that the interment took place in the second chapel to the right in the Church of the Cordeliers, which was at that time the finest in Avignon. Yet Petrarch himself (cf. suprà, The Place of her Death and Burial) tells us that she was buried in a lowly grave near to her own house, which was in an open country-place, and not in a great city. Cf. also Eclogue xl.—

Mor	S					
					+	
Obscuro dimersit			humo.			

(5) "ad vesperam." This requires us to believe

that Laura, who died at Caumont, was taken from there to Avignon,—a distance of eight miles; allowed, though she had died of the plague, to pass the gates; and buried on the evening of the day of her death.

- (6) "Animam . . . in celum . . . rediise mihi persuadeo." Any student of the Italian poems In Vitâ would fail to understand where the difficulty came in; to the In Morte it is unnecessary to refer. That the reputed author should have to persuade himself that Laura had gone to heaven, after a hundred previous allegations that it was her proper home and the place of her most certain retirement, is a priggish incongruity impossible to ascribe to Petrarch.
- (7) "loco, qui sepe sub oculis meis redit . . ." The poet is made to say that he placed this memorandum preferably in his Virgil, which he so often looks at, so that he may reflect that there should be nothing to please him any longer in this life. So that he may reflect! And what had become of Laura's portrait which he always carried with him? The passage is an incongruity, of the same kind as (6).
- (8) "babilone." It is time to flee from Babylon. In nearly all cases, whether Latin or Italian, Petrarch uses the name Babylon as a term of abuse

for Avignon. In the others, it means (a) Bagdad, (b) the then existing pagan empires, (c) Babel; and, in one instance only, (d) the world as contrasted with the Church. This exception occurs in a long letter to his brother Gerard (Frac., ii. 72-82), whom he reminds of the pity of God, by which he (Gerard) was led in the right way, and made to know by experience what was the difference between "Babylon" and "Jerusalem." The date of this letter is a little later than the death of Laura, and so far that is a point in favour of the authenticity of the Note, where Babylon is clearly intended to mean "the world." The force, however, of this argument is greatly impaired by Petrarch's informing us that he is not writing in his usual manner, but in a "foreign and almost monastic style, considering you rather than myself." (Gerard was a Carthusian monk.) And it is curious to observe that, at the very end of the letter, which is written ex oppido Carpensi, he employs Babylon in his usual sense; as if he had said, "I need not add,whenever there is a chance of getting away from Avignon, I take it" (Nec addo; dum adhuc de Babylone patet exitus, effugio).

(9) "Ut de Africano ait Seneca." Laura has gone to heaven, as Seneca says of Scipio. Petrarch in two of his poems, (Se Virgilio, 9-14, and Da poi,

- 23) associates Laura with Scipio. In the former, he says that she and Scipio have had their praises sung by unpolished poets (i.e. himself and Ennius); in the latter, Laura is conducted by the most distinguished person of antiquity, viz. Scipio, to the temple of Modesty. But to mention Seneca and Scipio simply for the purpose of introducing the fact that Laura has gone to heaven, is such an extraordinary waste of literary energy, such a bathos, and in such a connection, that we cannot conceive Petrarch capable of it. Imagine an Englishman writing, You have a cold, as Shakespeare said of Ben Jonson! Thousands of people in every rank of life have for thousands of years made the same allegation of thousands of other people. There needs no Seneca to tell us this. The passage could only have been written by a scribe of feeble and commonplace mind, desirous of inserting, somehow or other, two names characteristic of Petrarch's authorship.
- (10) "Rumor." The allegation of the Note is that Ludovicus (= Ludwig, generally called "Socrates" by Petrarch) sent news of a "rumour" that Laura was dead. He was a most intimate triend of Petrarch, and probably knew Laura personally.

Unfortunately for the text, Petrarch's tenth

Eclogue is extant to confute it. In this, Socrates is made by Petrarch to say

Vidimus his oculis superos Sylvane verendos Leniter avulsam meliori in parte locantes:

and again

Vidi equidem

(Sylvanus is Petrarch). Socrates, therefore, was an eye-witness of Laura's death or saw her dead body, and could have had no doubt whatever of the fact of her decease. When he wrote, he must have written quite definitely, from his own knowledge and not upon rumour. It is probably to him that Petrarch owed the minute particulars which we find in the Triumph of Death.

On the whole, it would appear clear that, whether we regard the internal evidence, or the evidence of handwriting or spelling, the Note was not written by Petrarch. Those who are unconvinced of the truth of this conclusion must at least admit that, as an element of historical testimony, it is absolutely worthless.

Who, then, was the author?

During the last years of his life, Petrarch had a very intimate friend and enthusiastic follower, Lombardo da Serico, a native of Padua, who acted as his librarian, secretary, and factotum. Körting (p. 450) describes him in the following emphatic

terms: - "He had a talent for imitation, and understood with exceptional mastery how to place himself on the same level as his master, at least in outward appearance. So well did he succeed, that a tractate of which he was the author (taking as a pattern Petrarch's Vita Solitaria), in which he praises solitude and a life free from wants, has been accepted without hesitation as one of Petrarch's own letters." (The pseudo-letter beginning Fervet animus, Frac., iii. 506. I have no hesitation in saying that this was specially modelled on the one given in Frac., i. 454.) Lombardo had gained Petrarch's entire confidence, and knew his whole mind. He professed, as far as he could gather them, all the teachings and sentiments of his chief, in whose business affairs he was also much con-In every way he courted and flattered the poet. Petrarch, indeed, appointed him his residuary legatee. After Petrarch's death, he took charge of the poet's books; he continued and completed the Lives of Illustrious Men, and demonstrated, in so doing, the essential conceit of his own nature. He followed up the task by writing a feeble work of his own, with the imitative title, Lives of Illustrious Women.

Lombardo must have had ample opportunities. Imagine a man in his position obtaining, after

Petrarch's death, possession of the private Virgil, and finding no mention of Laura, or possibly a few stray unfinished notes. In those days, it would have been by no means considered an immoral thing, but rather an act of dutiful artistic completeness, to make up the Note as we find it.

The first point to attract attention would be the last and tenth alternative in Petrarch's will, viz., that if he died anywhere out of Italy, the testator would desire to be buried in a church of the Fratres Minores, i.e. Franciscans. Surely this was natural enough. Seven, at least, of Petrarch's own friends and correspondents bore, like himself, the name of Francis; it was, in a variant, the name of his son-in-law and grandson and daughter (who was married in Treviso in the Church of St. Francis). The order was popular, and the name fashionable; and Petrarch had a whim for names. It might be assumed that the only reason for this would be the poet's desire to be buried near his mistress. "Out of Italy," the only place of great importance in the poet's life was Avignon; and there the most important church was that of the Franciscan Cordeliers. If Lombardo wrote to that city for information (for he never seems to have himself left Italy)

he would very probably be told that the only Laura of any distinction buried there about that time was a de Sade Laura; and the Avignon wrrespondent may have furnished or suggested the information about the Church of Santa Clara. Or Tedaldus, a close friend of Lombardo's, and a good customer for copies, himself a member of the Franciscan order, may have been the channel of information. The dates had been published long before by Petrarch; the opening sentences were easily obtainable from the Italian poems; Babilone and Scipio were, of course, two characteristic names which would catch a reader's eye at once. The spelling of Laura was evidently a difficulty in presence of Colonna's letter (v. suprà), where it is written Laurea, and Petrarch's fondness for the laurel tree; so that a compromise was effected by running the e into the a in such a manner as to make the word read either way. centuries this masterpiece of combination deceived the elect. The mere handwriting, being in a printed style, would be easy to imitate. Moreover, the other notes were probably not at that time concealed, and could be used as guides for auch words as "rumor," vesperam, heu, amplius, and (5) (4.7., iii. 382).

The two gems of the forgery are assuredly the mihi persuadeo and rumor.

The presence of the Note would add considerably to the selling value of the Virgil (a matter that must have been at a very early date prominently before Lombardo). This was very early announced. Petrarch died in Lombardo's debt.

PART II IN VAUCLUSE

.



At Jorga Head.

PART II

IN VAUCLUSE

O VALLEY long desired, immortal spring, O mighty rock, whose sovran front looks down On that fair plain and seems in afterthought; Sweet sacred air and every pensive shade, Where peace secluded sits with inward smiles,-Hear me, I come at last. The changing world, That clangs and clashes in hated Avignon, Sounds far off now in your fair solitude, Far off.-far off. Not the first time your pilgrim, dear Vaucluse, But now I roam to you to roam no more. Here in my house of stone and poor roughcast,5 I shall want little, and may do high work. Ay, Settimo, we were boys then, but friends Since my poor father's exile to Provence, And rambled here together, and I made A vow to have this refuge when I could. Will my soul find her rest? Ah me,-perhaps.

How stands the account so far? With treble pangs

My mother bore me, and my lifetime since Hath been but long inception, agonies In issue, vanities alive and dead. Would that the ship we came in had gone down, And some fair angel taken home my soul Unharboured to its peers and native heaven! Well, these regrets are idle, and old Convennol Taught me at school that fortune ever yields-Unto a good man struggling. Ah, quaint fellow, His precept did not stand him in good stead; I wish he had not stolen-and sold. alas-The valued books I lent him; poor he'll die. Then, on the grammar days, seven tardy years⁶ At Carpentras, Montpellier, and Bologna, I spent, nay lost, in study of the law,-A servile study of dishonesty. Yet at Bologna were good friends with me, Mainard, and happy Guido, and young James,-The first I knew of the Colonnas; Then died my parents, and I stood alone. But for Colonna, I might well have starved. They did indeed well by me; took me in, Made me house-tutor and a friend; and then One stronger than Colonna-Poverty-Set me an outcast on the Church's steps,



Roman Sculpture, Arc de Carpentras.

And haled me in, and passed me for a deacon. Fate might have played me worse, for otherwise I should have had scant learning and no books, And every aspiration stifled. Now. I am a canon, and already mate With bishops, cardinals, and fear no pope. Urged by unresting feet, I have wandered far, Like the Homeric hero, to Belgium, France, Switzerland, Germany, and have even caught Glimpses of Spanish and of British seas. But Rome, alas, how can I speak of Rome, Dear to me by a hundred filial ties, Rome, the great centre of the old grim reign Of classic emperors, and the mighty men Whose works survive for ever? Would that I Had heard great Cicero plead, or talked with him Of God, the soul, and immortality; Or, maybe, moralised with Seneca, Whose pithy apothegms haunt all my prose; Or laughed with Terence and his motley crew; Or sometimes visited the little lodge Where lived my dainty Horace, and there held Fair converse with him of our mutual art. Or met him at the country farm, where wit And light-winged banter would prolong the day Far to brown evening. Or perhaps I'd call On the sweet Mantuan, who should tell me tales Of the old deities and their ways with men, And charm me, willing to be charmed by him, With musical bucolics, till I vowed To live for aye a peasant, and to write Bucolics all my days.

Ay, I am more than half a pagan now,
And Rome a ruin and a foul disgrace,—
How different from my thoughts and all I had
read!

Thou Benedict, canst thou not hear the voice 7
Of crumbling temples, altars lone and bare?
The queen of cities since all time hath been
Sits widowed and in tears.—Pontiff, return
And build once more Christ's city in the waste;

Restore the glory of those ancient rites;
Leave the Franks' country a dependency,
And hold thy way to Rome, there to be crowned
With that high triple crown, great priest and
king.

For haply on that dreadful judgment day
A greater King shall ask, What hast thou
done?

Where hath my Vicar dwelt? And wilt thou say, Alas, O Lord, defaulting have I been, And nailed thee once more to the Cross, and

ta'en



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Château des Évèques, Sorga.

No order for thine honour? There's a hell For such confessions.

How clear the morn is, in this sheltered spot! How calm, how windless, my beloved vale! Here I can sit and muse of those old times Wherein I fain had lived. Here, book in hand, With ready pencil I can write alone And seldom meet a face. All round are woods Clust'ring far up, where I did hunt at times Wild boar and deer. Now I prefer to join The fishermen below, eternally Patient, as I suppose becomes all anglers, And wading to the knees. Strange craft it is, Watching for what's unseen. Nay it is not By any means bad sport, and suits my mind And contemplation well; also, sea-trout Serve my too little changing meals, -not quite The style for old Colonna's table! No! Sometimes a brace of monsters go to Phil,-Dear Philip Cabassol, my sweet old friend8 Of the grim castle yonder. Had I built My own house somewhat higher, it were safer From the spring floods, which indeed rise too close

In this small mead of mine, right-banked.9 Then, for a climb, I can ascend the rock,

And by the little chapel gaze far off.10 Would that the rock faced Rome, not Babylon!11 My sighs would go the straighter. Thence I see Symphorien on the knoll at Caumont; then The greensward at Pieverde, and that low hill Shading my love in her house opposite. Ah me! my love, who made my destiny. Seldom do any friends ascend the vale: My rough fare and poor quarters frighten them. Still, I have had good William, and Sennuccio Learned in love, and Socrates, and Lelius, 12 Names to live always in my inmost heart. Ah, my Sennuccio, have I not told all My love to you, the deep love of my soul? Did you not meet us on that choice May day When earth and air were happy too with love. And give us these twin roses, saying, The sun Ne'er shone before on such a pair of lovers? You also, you alone, have seen the flush That answered on that brow for ever fair. Sometimes dear father Cabassol descends From his grand castle over there; he knows The secret of my conflicts,—and, not least, Of Laura too.

But here comes my good Raymund, now some months

My faithful servitor. What now, old man?

Another letter from that Babel? Yes,
With a new book, I see. Well, take you care
Of both, and put them on my table. Ah,
Right worthy fellow! Proud he is to hold
A book against his bosom. Every time
I trust him thus, he mumbles the author's name
With reverence, and even seems to learn
Somewhat, and glows with classic happiness.
What joys and sorrows do I not tell him,
A friend if ever was one? He works o'er
My stony barren acres; his old wife,
Thin, sun-tanned, toils from morn till night,
And into night, with him. Their bed is straw;
Their food, black gritty bread; their drink,
weak wine

(Say vinegar). But neither one complains
Or utters one desire, or hates mankind.
Heaven take them to their home, when their
time comes!

Save to these honest friends, I speak but little,
Unless some peasant tells me all his wrongs
Had from some other peasant, and would know
What is the law for his important case:
And I, with much solemnity, thereon
Adjudicate, and bid them live in peace.
As to the common wanderers, my dog
(Colonna's present) keeps them off, and sleeps

Outside the door at night. His scratching wakes me

If I lie long in bed.

What brings my only brother in my thoughts?
Gerard, I wish you would come oftener here,
And leave awhile your convent, but perhaps
'Twere better not. Not long have you ta'en
vows

As a full-fledged Carthusian. Out of the world You have departed young in years, but old In sorrow. You and I were lovers long,—Ay, passionate lovers,—and we took delight In mated months, and bore the self-same pangs And tasted of that sweetness, all too sweet, You more than I. And now your love is dead, And you go bent and mourning at your prayers, While Laura lives and is my centre still. How long it seems since we lodged in that house

At Avignon! What dandies we were then! 13 Do you remember how we took such pains To keep our linen white in that foul place? Such dressing and undressing! Every curl Set properly; our shoes too tightly laced, And every fold in order? Ay, still lives The sense of those old ways,—will, till I die. My hair, now white since I was twenty-five,

How it has ever vexed me! Was it love,
All-torturing love that blanched me; or a mind
Too swift and eager, as some friends have said?
Alas, I know not. "Twould have matched a
life

Like thine perhaps; well would the snowy mount

Have looked down on the separate - distant plain

Of my disparted sins, as Ventoux looks 14

Over his burning landscape, and takes the sun

Blushing at night, and cowls his hoary head

With the brown darkness. Snow to snow bides

here.

What of my plans? Enow of work in hand.
Bucolics? Yes. On Solitary Life,
Two books,—inscribed to Philip, that kind friend
And neighbour; and, a higher than all these,
A poem on great Scipio,—I mean
The elder Africanus,—a name dear
From my first boyhood. What shall I style it?
Ah,—Africa! No better title, sure.
That will take time, though. Then, my lover's
verse,

Writ in the vulgar tongue, seems growing on With no sign of cessation; while the letters

(Half meditations) are a business now.

Where will it end? What good? O Jhesu mine,

How far seems now thy heaven! For, if the mind

Have these thoughts and such scope, what says my flesh?

I know 't is planning, too; for though I fast
And keep it down spare-fed, it conquers me,
And I groan on defeated. Have I not
Stolen forth at night from that vile town, shamefaced,

And hurried hither for a brief respite

From my too long uncleanness? Can I find

No way of rest from that? The coursers drag

My soul now up, now down; and that foul thing

Dogs me with maddening footsteps through the mire. 16

And now I have a son, alas, a son!

Poor babe, he lies there for a living sign

Of my transgression,—ay, of every sin.

For there is not a sin but doth engender

Its own bad kind; and that now shapen sin

Grows and grows on beneath the face of heaven,

And darkens many a life. What will he be?

A sin to curse my sin? And all his days

A mirror of my wrong? Or wilt thou, Christ, Baptize him of thyself, and make him pure, And so my heart the purer? Let me pray. For who knows of thy will, how deep it is, How tender, who wert once a baby too Like him, and dandled on a mother's knee, And hadst a father's playtime, and didst grow First son, and then a saviour? Save thou me. For sin came in by woman, and unrest, And the long burden of our weary days. No evil, but a woman's heart beats deep Without abatement in it. With the wife 16 Comes the eternal grumble, the suspicion, The fidget, the fair filth, the jealousy, The made-up face, the paint, the wandering looks, The peeping bosom, the wily innocence, The secret pander, the pretended sighs, The unknown rival, the abhorred bed, Serpents most pious, tricks behind one's back. Shipwreck, eternal quarrelling,-Ah, no, No wife for me! And offspring are a curse For the most part, at least; and the son longs To make his heirship sudden. What an age We live in! I could tell some tales, some tales, Of papal halls, priests' houses, parsonages, And monkish cells, and damned adulteries, To say no more.

Yet there be women found Such as my mother, Elect by name, and now The elect of God; ay, grand she was of soul, And innocent and sweet in all her ways. Gerard and I have lost a guide between The broad and narrow path. But she shall live Enshrined in this my verse. The self-same stone Shall press us both. Indeed, it is not fair To censure all. For Agnes and the rest Of the Colonna matrons have been wise, And in all good repute, and kind to me, And history recordeth some as rare. Yet they be rare, and every man new born Enters on life foredoomed, conceived in sin. And what is life itself? A space of toil,17 A wrestling, a stage-play, a labyrinth Of errors, or a game of mountebanks, A desert, a morass, a land of briers, An unploughed valley, or a crest unclomb: Sombre its caves, and what wild beasts dwell there! There is the stream of tears, the sea of woes. Rest ever anxious, labour all for naught, Hope without fruit, false pleasure but true pain. Full breadth of poverty but empty wealth, Inglorious honour, waste of all desire, Adversity with never-stayed complaint, The sting in all enjoyment, and the sweet,

Alas, not seldom bitter; a brief halt
At wayside inns; a dirty prison; a ship
Without a rudder; a blind man unled;
A stormy sea, a dangerous coast, a port
All doubtful,—with no dearth of monstrous wreck;
Hate, lust, and anger, virtue aye assumed,
Successful fraud labelled with honour's name,
Innocence scoffed at, faith held up to scorn,
And puffed-up science that no science is;
A land of ghosts and spectres, 'neath the reign
Of Lucifer and demons; or a sleep
Death ends and every dream. But yet some way
Remains, thank heaven, to good life, and hereafter
Unto the eternal.

Sweet art thou, O my music. When my soul Longs for some rest, then I can play my lute And draw some drift of comfort. I have heard The wind play softly on the æolian harp In tones I cannot match. Whose hand was that? Did fair Apollo teach the rustic Pan, And he our human fingers? Then who taught The warblers of the thicket? Thee in chief, O nightingale, that in night's sombre noon Dost utter long lament for some lost mate, Or unforgotten joy, or hopeless love? What of the lark that carols to the morn

The multitudinous rapture of his song,
While from the rearwood comes the mournful coo
Of some lone dove aweary? Long ago
They learned perhaps from streams; for Sorga here
I find hath every tone and change of cadence;
Keys in variety, and such full scale
As suits all harmony. In winter, too,
There is grand æolism upon my hills,
When the blast sweeps the pine-boughs, and wails
forth

In long-drawn sobs and shrieking semitones.

Ay, nature hath her music, and my soul

Doubtless responds; sometimes quite gay, or slow

With sullen obbligatos of desire.

But now my heart seems waked, for Love sits there,

And, opening wide his lips, he bids me sing.

What shall I sing? O Love, what else but thee,
Whose foot came first upon my soul's gaunt rocks
In one eternal sunrise? What save thee,
Unspeakable in limit of poor words,
But in the infinity of wavy sound
Communicable and known? Who measures thee
In thine ineffable essence, or shall trace
The secret of thy immemorial ways?
Not I, though now I see that delicate hand
Led me, as one quite blind, from my youth up,

And took me for his own, fed me with manna (Such as they make in heaven), and tuned my heart

As I do tune this lyre. On summer mount,
In winter vale, I heard thee,—now I know,—
And muttered as in answer; thou didst draw me
Till, far behind, the unperceiving crowd
Lost me; and I lost them, and came far forth
Unto this silence and thy tenderer air.
Well, had but this been all. Alas, O Love,
Thy peace is chased with swords, such swords as
make

Unrest of heart; anxieties, old lusts,
The sombre night-watch and the pallid cheek;
When life seems one long journey from thy face,
And death grows welcome with the ageing hour.
Yearning I sing; and this sequestered vale,
That seems somehow in natural touch with me,
Befriends my wonted solitary chant,—
Unless the birds, and beasts, and fish can listen.

[He sings.]

LOVE'S OBSESSION

Alone and pensive, through the desolate wold

I go with measured languor in the pace;

My eyes alert for flight where human trace

Hath left its imprint on the desert mould.

Other resort I find not to withhold

From conscious glances of the populace; For, in the cheerless aspect of my face, An inward fire is read through outer cold.

Ay, I do now believe that plain and hill,

Forest and flood, know well my life, and
what

Its temper, hidden from all other heed;
But never road so rough, seek where I will,
Stays the strong step of Love, who ceaseth
not

Pleading with me, as I with him must plead.

Yes, those last lines are right,—he ceaseth not.
And what a lonely thing love is! One heart
Tells after all no love to any other;
But murmurs it, and hints it, and essays
This way and that, and then comes home again
After the ineffectual agony,

And waits and mourns unspoken. Is there sin
In mere expression? Or perhaps we are
But infants now, and may hereafter learn
Heaven's language, that twain speak,—and speak
no more.

And if the mate shall die? O death indeed,
Unutterable death. Is there no bribe,
No pact that I can make with thee, dull friend,
To save her, save her? Do not the eyes go first,
For they were made first, as we know; and then
The brain swift follows? Cannot my tears make
An altar-offering? I would weep them choice
Out of my heart, and blanch them on the way
Till they were pure as diamond; such libation
As some sad spirit makes when he looks on,
But cannot speak his service in dull ears,
Such as we have, and pleads and yearns in vain.
Ah me! I cannot understand her dead.

Good news, she's better.

Now, how well I mind

The first time that I saw her; tender she was,
And walking round the little farmhouse,—slow,
And like a lesser angel. Yes, my tablets
Carry the well-worn date,—on April sixth
Of thirteen twenty-seven. I spoke her first,
And she with winning frankness answered me,
And ever since my sure belief hath been
God's long reserve of pity shaped the words.
How the wind blew her unbound hair, and
tossed

And played with it, and knotted it in tangles,
As she my heart with that first breeze of love!
She was of olden mind, though young in years,
And soon found out my secret, and was shy.
Her people kept her back, and left me lone,
Haunting the place for weeks, and it was long
Before we came to terms . . . Good, too, she was,
And never trivial; showing that sense
Of heaven and holiness which sits so well
On any woman. Yet she had sportive ways,
And was most keen of mind; her intellect
Matched well her heart. White, slender hands
she had,

And dainty little figure, and fair feet,
And grand magnificence of golden hair.
Where did Love pluck the roses for her cheeks? 18

Where found that song celestial that she sings
And so undoes me? Did he make those words,
That issue through her gates of ivory,
Pure, clear, and calm, and freeze and fire me
so? 19

Ay, verily. And how her innocent soul

Loved the fair flowers that worshipped where she

trode

And prayed her impress! She would deck her locks

And delicate bosom with them, fairer she
Than any; and her dress was green, as fit
For that small place of greenery, so named 20
Near where she dwelled,—and, like herself,
A special paradise. What fun we had
Over that glove I stole; how seriously
She chided me; and how we laughed at last!
But heaven dwelt in her eyes, and Love sate
there, 21

And played and toyed and hid him in the deep, And peeped ere she could know it. Grand, dark eyes,

O how I love you! Stars in all my night, Lamps of the soul, and my sweet governance. Yes, of the three canzoni that I wrote About them, this perhaps will sing the best:—

OF LAURA'S EYES

I

Sweet is the light I see,

My noble lady, in your glancing eyes,—
Blest light that points to me the heavenward
way;

And in its wonted wise

There, where alone with Love within I'd be, Your heart shines through as in the light of day.

This to behold makes me do good alway,

And leads me to my glory and my end;

This only keeps me from the vulgar throng.

Never could human tongue

Recount what pulses from those orbs descend, Twin orbs divinely clear;

Whether grim winter scattered hoarfrost send,

Or later on fresh youth makes glad the year,—

The time I felt at first Love's stress draw near.

II

I ponder: if on high,

Whence the Eternal Mover of each star Deigned to show earth such instance of his skill,

The rest as lovely are,

Would he would ope the prison where I lie, Whose doors close access to those regions still.

Then I return to my old strife of will,
Grateful to nature and my birthday blest,
Which kept me safe for such beatitude;
To her for lofty mood
Of hope, raised in a soul till then distressed,—
My soul, till then a load of misery;
But from that day joy ever came a guest,
Filling with noble thoughts exultingly
The heart of which those grand eyes have
the key.

III

Never a draught of bliss

That Love could offer here or fickle Chance To those on whom their choicest gifts fall free,

But I for one dear glance



Would barter, from those eyes whence comes all peace,

As from its primal roots springs every tree. O winsome flashes, as of angels, ye
That make me happy, firing that delight
Which in its utter sweetness wastes me so,—
As swiftly scattered go

All other rays when yours are burning bright,

So from my heart must fare,

When that strange sweetness enters in its might,

Each other thing and every taint of care, Love and yourself alone remaining there.

ΙV

What wealth of pleasure lies

In happiest lovers' hearts, together blent
All in one place, is nought when some glad
day

A little you relent,

And through the black and white of those grand eyes

Waft dainty lights of Love's delicious play.

I know, when swathed within your cot you lay,

For my defects and hostile fortune's blows, Heaven had this recompense set forth so long.

Hence your veil does me wrong,

And the dear hand that so oft comes and goes

Between that joy so blest

And my own eyes, whence day and night there flows

One deep desire to ease the weary breast, Which with your changing aspect shifts its quest.

V

Because, alas, the scope

Of my own natural gifts avails me nought,
Nor makes me fit such dear regard to earn,
Therefore I ever sought
To be conformable to that high hope
And noble fire with which I wholly burn.
If quick to good, to evil slow to turn,
Holding the world's desire in scorn and shame,

I might become by dint of anxious care, I should perchance win there, In your benign esteem, a worthy name.

Ah, sooth, my woes retreat

Not otherwise than my sad heart would claim,

As the grand eyelids tremble, at last so sweet,

That height of hope when loving lovers meet.

O song, thy sister has gone on before:

In the same room I hear the other stir,

Therefore I rule another sheet for her.

How well I mind my journey down the Rhone, When I came back from northern voyaging, And the mute message sent along the stream! Ay, this was it:—

LOVE'S MISSIONER

Swift river, born below an Alpine crest, Scouring along (whence thou art named,

they say),

With me thou yearning flowest night and day,

I led by Love, while nature guides thy quest.

Go on before, thy journey unrepressed

By sleep or weariness; but ere thou pay
Due tribute to the sea, halt on thy way
Where the grass grows more green, 'neath

deeper rest.

There thou wilt find our Sun so sweet, so bright,

That decks with flowers, and graces thy left strand;

Haply she mourns (dear hope) my tardy flight:

Kiss thou her feet, her beautiful white hand;

Tell her the kissing means untold delight;

My will moves on, though tired and still I stand.

Ah, Rhone brings back that memorable time
I came upon her sudden, grown up then,
Bathing in this very Sorga, farther west,
Nude as our women do. Dazed with the
sight—22

The vision half-incredible,—divine,—
I stood stock-still; and she,—either to hide
Her too fair aspect, or to punish me,—
Splashed me all o'er with water. Then I went,

Slow turning, speechless, through the trees away.

And now my life is utterly one war;
For I wage war on Love and Love on me.
Laura gives no return,—if that can be
Return, where all is jealousy and anger
Mixed with no small disdain: yet all so sweet
Are even those, I cannot give them up.
And when I go to see her, feeling fierce
And bent on something, otherwise on death,
There she sits calm, unruffled, on that stone,
Cold as the stone itself; and with a nod
Turns me once more to her obedient ice.
Yet I must love her; and some days I think
There is some hope for me. For I have
seen

At times an earnest look in those proud eyes,

A flush upon her cheeks when we have met;

And once, when I announced quite suddenly
A parting for some weeks, the telltale tears
Flowed forth in spite of her, and she would
know,

Who takes so far from me my faithful friend?

Ay, I should see her oftener, but she
Is timid of her honour, and her friends 23

Dread the first growth of scandal; so that she stays

Too much at home, and my soul hungers here.

Well, I will find a chaperone some day.

Would I were with her but one night, alone 24

Here in the dim recesses of the wood;

With but the secret stars for witnesses,

And that night held, and never came a dawn.

But now his brown wings open o'er the vale;
I must within for rest, though I hate rest.²⁵
The morn is mine, and day's activities,
And the bright exercise of intellect
Backward and forward through unbounded time,

And the soul's instant flight beyond the sun. Here is her portrait, made for me by Memmi.

How like it is! The half-shut eyes, the pose
Haughty and still alert; the gathered hair,
The veil, the pearl-ringed neck, the noble
front

Where I see ever what none else have seen; These, too, I love. Sweet effigy, one kiss,— Would I could kiss her too. Now for my prayer That other worship,—then for silent sleep.**

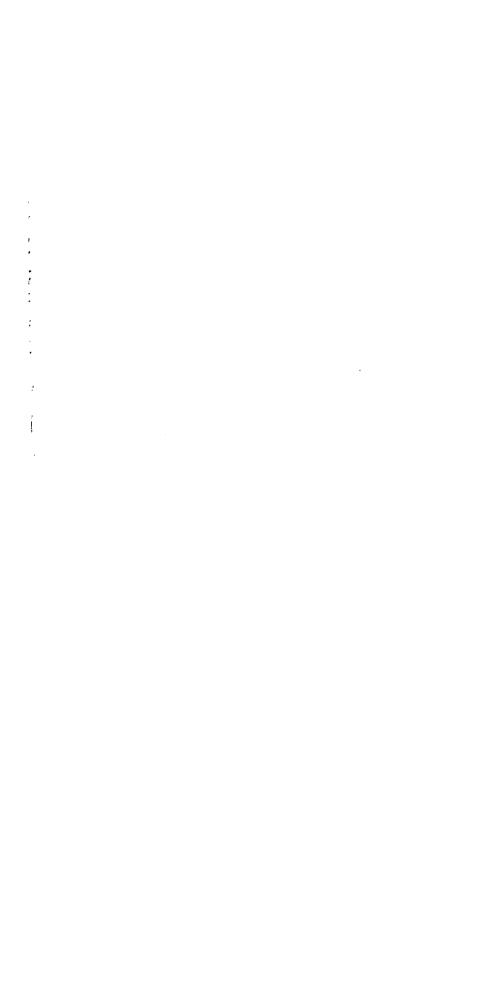
[Prays.

Christ Jhesu, my salvation, if human misery may incline thee to pity, help me, for I am miserable, and favourably hear my prayers. Make my walk pleasing unto thee, and direct my steps into the way of eternal salvation. Deign to help me in the day of my departure and in that supreme hour of my death; remember not my iniquities, but forgivingly receive my spirit when it issues from this body. Enter not into judgment with thy servant, O Lord; fount of pity, deal pitifully with Favour my cause and cover my unseemliness in that latest day; nor suffer this the work of thy hands to reach the proud empire of thy enemy and mine, or to be the sport of unclean spirits and famished hounds, my God, my Pity.

Omnipotent, everlasting God, forgive those who

fear thee, and spare thy suppliants, so that the dreadful fires rain not, nor any storm-blasts blow (on my departing spirit); and may the menace of thy majesty redound to the honour of thy praise. Through Christ our Lord. Amen.

PART III AT CAUMONT





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PART III

AT CAUMONT

How glorious is the morning! All the air Seems full of light, and hath full pulse of love. Soft move the whispering zephyrs down the stream,

And I move with them to my dear ladye.

Be with me, Love, this day, and plead with me
If she should prove obdu'rate; let this day
Bring me some little gain, if but one sigh,
One glance, or one light pressure of the hand;
And should she sing, O tune her heavenly song
To me, at heaven's gate waiting many a year.

For every tree in Sorga's restful dale
Knows well my plaint; thou, river, hast heard
And sung back moaning answer to my heart;
And the wild birds and animals look at me,
With long attention in pathetic eyes,
As if they knew. O creatures, tell it far,
Far on in front, until it reach her there;
O give her pause,—that she put down her work

And raise a distant look to me, to me.

And thou, grim Ventoux, whose white top I know,—

Keep sentinel above our timid ways;
Remember thee of April, when the net
First caught me, and hath held me prisoner
since.

Thor road will suit me well; and then I go
Due south to Caumont, see my darling there,
And so to-day to Avignon, by Durance;
Lelius will take me in; and on the road
I will correct my stream song. When I made it,
I was a younger lover; and, like most of them,
Thought I should die an early death

MY STREAM

1

Clear waters cool and sweet,

Wherein those limbs so fair

She laved, alone whom lady I confess;

Tree once her favourite seat,

With sighs I see her there,

Her wont against its glorious flank to press;

Plants, flowers, that the dress

Covered, a graceful guise
O'er the angelic breast;
Air in deep holy rest,
Where love first oped my heart with noble
eyes;

Give audience all in one To my last words by utter grief undone.

II

If so my fate decide

(As heaven be pleased it may),

That Love should close these eyes with stress of tears,

May friendly hands then hide

Among you this poor clay,

The soul returning nude to its own spheres.

Death will be reft of fears,

If on this hope I lean

Unto that pass of doubt;

Nor could the soul tired out

Reach ever to a haven more serene;

Nor could a grave more blest

Hold the so toilworn flesh and bones in rest.

Ш

The time will come, perchance,

When to the wonted place

That bright wild creature will return benign;

And there, where first her glance

I met, that day of grace,

May cast a yearning look (ah, happy sign),

Seeking me: pity mine

Now dust beneath a stone,

Love may in kindly wise

Urge her to such sweet sighs

As in my favour may on high be known,

And she o'er heaven prevail,

Drying her eyes with that most lovely veil.

IV

Fair branches that let fall
(Sweet the remembered story)
A rain of blossoms on her lap that day;
And she sat amid all,
Meek in so great a glory,
Quite hidden by the storm of loving play.
Some flowers went border-way,
Some her bright tresses found;
Ay, pearls on golden sheen
Were that day to be seen.

Some lighted in the brook, some on the ground;

In pretty eddies near,

Some whirled and seemed to say, Love reigneth here.

V

How many times I said

(Then with strange awe replete)

God's truth, but she was born in paradise!

That mien divinely led,

Face, words and smile so sweet,

Laid such forgetfulness upon my eyes,-

I had so lost the guise,

The wonted form of things,-

I asked, as sighs allow,

Whence came I here, and how?

Deeming I was in heaven, not at those springs.

Thenceforth delight so blest

Fills that green spot, that elsewhere is no rest.

Song, if thou wert adorned as thou art fain,

Thou might'st be brave, and then

Leave these too sombre shades for haunts

of men.

Well, then, old horse,
You know the place to stop, too well, too well,
Here I shall tether you, and mount again.
How slow the shadows glide upon her eaves!
Here the rough mistral cannot reach, nor storm
Smite ever loudly; here the woodland flowers,
The heralds of the spring, anemones,
And violets tinct with purple of the night,
Hold up their cups to catch a glance, a word
That falleth from her, and expectant stand
As I do move expectant. When they sleep,
Their faces close unto her face, their east.
There is the mean porch which those mastiffs
guard,

And now give tongue against me. There's the byre,

With the great savage cattle that they keep. The windows are both open,—she is walking, Or in the rear field under the big beech. I see her. All the air is still in homage, Glowing with her own light, my sun, my sun.

LOVE'S ARREST

Love, let us halt awhile and watch our pride,

Things above nature's wont sublime and
new;

On her, unstinted sweetness falls like dew, And in that light doth heaven on earth abide.

What wondrous skill her soul's rare vesture dyed Graced it with gold and pearls of strangest hue!

Mark how her feet and eyes move soft and true

Through that retreat in shade of the hillside

The verdant lawn and many a tinted cup,

Scattered 'neath yonder ilex age-embrowned,

Pray that her feet but press them as she

goes;

And while we look, the spangled sky lights up
In conscious joy unto its utmost round,—
Hushed by her own grand orbs to new
repose.

He approaches.

Pet. Sweet Laura, are you well? How long it is

Since I last saw you! Are your eyes once more Clear and quite strong again to bear the sun, As mine to my fair sun? And have you read The little poem that I sent you last,—

Amor m'ha posto?

Laura. Sir, your questions come Quick as high Sorga in his April flood. Sit by me on the stone, if you will talk,-There,-that is near enough. Yes, I am well, My eyes are better too, and strong by this Even to read your sonnets. But I feel A strange exhaustion on me at times,-no pain-Only a sense of weakness. Lady Rixende 27 Came yesterday to see me, and has sent Some bitter herbs for medicine,-perhaps I may be quite myself again full soon. And you? Poor man, the old, old story, eh? The terrible complaint, devouring love, That leaves you not so meagre. Is it so? Then I must give you medicine. What a tale Your last sad sonnet tells! And you record Your ceaseless play upon my ancient name:-I am your solely soul and Sole dear; Were those the words? O, it surpasseth me,-

A grave man with such playthings; such is love! And fie, sir, Laura, l'aura, l'ora, ora,—
How I have laughed to read them! Do all men Write sonnets thus, or only you? Who wrote Those measures first?

Pet. Now thou art summer Sorga, dearest one!

O, be not ill again, it makes me mourn. But love doth alway make me pallid,-love That somehow seems unpaid, or paid with dole, And made to live on anger, scorn, contempt. These sonnets are quite modern, troubadour Of very latest, but not left in shape Complete, full-structured as then sung.-But you Remember how I have spoken of Dante, Who with my father was exiled long since And turned a wanderer? Well, he wrote some, And so did Cino, Guido, and Lapo. But I have been the first to point that song With the fine craftsman's touches; first to mould The measure to its highest; first to test Its hidden springs a hundred different ways. Why? For I had you rearward in my mind Prompting all my good purpose; and my pen Love moved to fullest music, and doth still. True, I am aye myself, not always grave, But set to one sweet end,-you know full well.

Laura. Well: then sometime perhaps I may improve

And better understand your wondrous work;
For some I know have praised it, and I have
Quite a small book of sonnets now within.
But there's your lute. Sing me a little song,
Not of impassioned love, but otherwise.

Pet. A little song I have, made on the way; A madrigal they term it.

Laura. And the subject?

Pet. What happened on Good Friday.

Laura. Then 't will be

Serious, mayhap, and that will suit us best.

[He sings.

THE CAPTURE

A wondrous angel, wise upon her wing,

Lighted from heaven near a pleasant brook,

Where, as fate willed, alone I fain would

pass;

Then, when she saw me a defenceless thing,
And none with me, a silken net she took,
And stretched it in Greenfoot amid the grass.
So was I caught, but glad to be her prize,
So sweet the light that issued from her eyes.

Laura. O naughty man, deceiver, I had forgot;

You always say Good Friday was the day When, — you had better thought of better things.

Pet. But sure, God sent you to me in my lack.

There is a providence shapes all our ways,
And each event has meaning. What, indeed,
Are honour and glory to an empty heart,
Or learning to an ever hungry soul?
O, many a night before I saw you, I
Have dreamed and dreamed for hours of mated
love.

The Church finds no such food; her dugs are dry.

But since I have had you for my friend, my heart,

My very self hath found out life, and seems

To have caught God's inner secret,—that deep
force

That gives keen insight to the intellect,
That sets to music every thought and word,
That strengthens one against a world at war.
And you have been so noble.

Laura. O, too much,
Too much for my weak virtues. What I am

Is but a poor assignment of high things
I gaze on and am dazzled; I can only pray,
And live with life and death. Still I am
glad

To have helped you somewhat; but your mating hour

Must have another meaning.

Now, in turn,
I will sing you the song of Herrad Abbess; **
When made, I know not; one of the sisters says

'Twas writ at least two hundred years ago.

[Laura sings.

CHANT OF THE ABBESS

Hail, O virgin cohort, hail!

Let your mighty faith avail;

Satan armed against you stands;

Armed and ready be your hands.

Triumph o'er this passing show; Earth's delights are poor and low; Wealth of heaven, delights most dear, Wait for those who persevere. Christ prepares espousals high; Spot and stain he hates to spy; Lovely virgins he would win, Chaste, and free from any sin.

Suffer hardships, bear the cross.

Mary Mother ever draws

Virgins like herself to be

Crowned with life eternally.

Forget not. Amen.

Well, you ponder; what think you?

Pet. O most sweet

Delightful singing; your dear voice would make

What were uncouth a pleasure. I could sit And listen to you all day long.

Laura. Yes, yes;

A mean to keep you in due order, sir.

Pet. The matter is far older than the abbess.

But she has put it simply,—a fair list Of duties and their regular rewards.

The mystic touch comes in, though, and my

Never was kind to mysticism; it prefers Things clear and sunny, and an open air, Not like these extasies of bridal hope.



Will heaven be all "delight"? And did she know

Aught of its "wealth"? Wealth seems a vulgar thing.

Best is it to work well in this life, then

When comes the passing, surely Christ will take

Our souls in pity, and keep the demons off.

Laura. Ah, I have pondered too, and many an hour

Thought of our ways, and what heaven hath in store.

I too like not the "espousals"; O, how coarse
Seems the idea of marriage anywhere,
But most of all in heaven. Shall I try
One other song for you, the author unknown?

Pet. Sweet, sing me as you will.

Laura. Then be it this:—

Laura sings.

LAURA'S SONG

Raise thy wings, O my dove,
Out of the prison;
Thou art my heart's fond love,
Not yet arisen.

Cold is the world for thee, Tainted its pleasure; Go then and find for me Bliss beyond measure.

Twain are all lovers here,
Sin keeps them double;
Joy is a kind of fear,
Rest, a less trouble.

There the one heart is made Nothing can sever; Free, and not once afraid, Happy for ever.

[She weeps.

Pet. A trance I think has held me. O, those tears!

Why weep you, dearest? Are you ill?

Laura. No, no;

Take off those greedy hands. O, see you not 29 What is the meaning of my ditty? But words, Words are too crude for any fine invention. And this is deep indeed. O world, how sad!

Pet. Why sad?

Laura. O sure you must remember well How Jesus told the unbelieving Jews

That in his heaven they wed not, nor are given In marriage, though the Church hath made it here

One of the Sacraments. O, holy heaven,
It dotes not on espousals nor on brides.
Is not heaven made for Love, sweet Love that
knows

No sex, nor wife nor husband, parent, child?

What is sex here, but only one poor mode

Of teaching love,—too oft, alas, unlearned?

And hath not Love his end, whether man love man

Or woman woman, in a heart unfeigned
And full of pity? This is the matehood meant,
And this those have who fain would serve the
Highest,

Live in his beam for ever, and so rest.

But with our horrible passions, poor blind beasts,
We cannot see it. Francis, dear Francis
(For so I once will call you), if your love
Be pure and true, and of no common flight,
Ascend with me. For now the time draws
near

For me perhaps first, thee later, that we go
To prove our training. When the Master sees
Our new-passed souls, what will his questions
be?

How do your years bear fruit? And have ye sinned

No sin against high Love? For Lord of all Love is, and save against him is no sin.

Will he not judge our playtime, and the thoughts

That lay behind our language, and the vows
Made unto him and me, and such long pains
As I have felt, he knows, and thou hast too,
Though in another wise. Vain was thy crown,
Thy laureate crown at Rome,—so deemst thou
now.

Vain the long struggle for my love, if thou
Learn not the secret of God's way, his end
To ripen us for that immortal love
Such as the angels live,—calm, sweet, and pure.
O, if you love me, one day,—but not here—
We shall be mated thus. But now, how oft
Your ways too ill befit your calling.

Pet. Dear,

Forget not that I am no priest, nor given ⁸⁰ To any priestly ways.

Laura. Alas, too true!

You have but deacon's orders; yet a clerk

Should not outrage his clerkship, and a deacon

Should not play worldly manners. Ah, sometimes

I weep, I weep for you.

Pet.

But, dearest, see

How it hath been with me. What chance had I

Even to live, when young? No merchant I

To daff and chaffer in the mart, nor plead

As I was bred a lawyer in the courts,

And sell my tongue and conscience. Only the

Church

Remained; and that career hath been
Less miry than the others; rest and peace
I ever seek, and calm arbitrament
Of silent study. Crowds and courts I hate,
And all the windy froth of Babylon.
Here I am fain for you, and Love and we
Can hold fair converse, and the time flows forth
In stream of deep contentment; let it be.

Laura. Ay, but the stream will reach the sea. What then?

Content with what? Content with mud and weeds

[Looking at him] And the foul scum that circles round the pool?

Ah no! That never can suffice thy way.

Let all thy course flow clear as Sorga flows,

Whether his April flood do hurry on,

Or in the summer he hath pensive course

Calm to a crystal sky. O, when at night

The sense of prayer comes on thee, and thy thoughts

Widen to things eternal, does not heaven
Seem nearer, and that prospect whereunto
All good plans shape themselves? Ah, let us
pray

Unto that end, that innocent sweet life,
Where the night comes no more, nor any grief,
Nor thirst, nor hunger; but the perfect soul
Moves with its mate high-joyous, and the stars
Sing immemorial music, and they float
Without one wing-waft through the airy fields,
Knowing their Saviour and their love are there.
Ah me!

Pet. [Aside] (I wonder how much she doth know).

Not easy, Laura dear, in these strange times Is it for any man to keep clean soul And hold to all well doing. Babylon, Foul Babylon is much too near, and there The Pope lives in disgraceful exile, girt With sycophants and plotters, in the sink And sewer of the éntire dirty world. Virtue came not with him; religion stayed Behind him with abandoned Peter: But in his train were cowardice, intrigue, Vile heresy, and hate, and every sin,

And some dread judgment soon to shake the world.

His ramparts rise and fend the filthy place
Full of abominations; and a horde
Of ignorant clergy crowds the "labyrinth"
And darkens heaven's own sun. No man can
live

There and be unpolluted. I have fled,—
I hate it. Here I would stay long time, indeed,
And work at what I will, and summon up
The mighty masters of antiquity
Who made the world of mind, and shaped our
thoughts

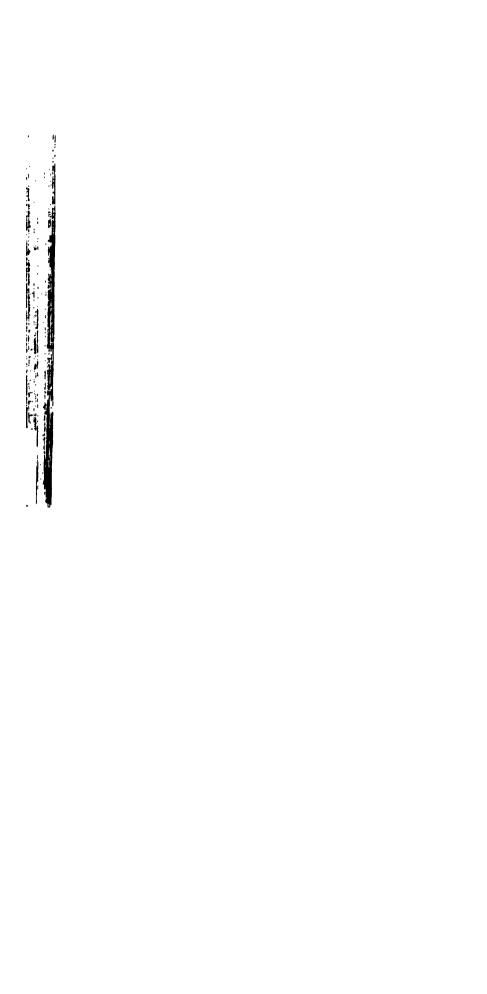
Unto diviner beauty, in that prime
Which we have nigh forgotten. And though
this

Is not mere love, yet it is passing fair,
And suits love well, and thee, sweet all-my-love,
Keeping my soul above the vulgar herd,
Detached, fine-textured, and of keener power.
And all this do I lay at those fair feet,—
Flowers begging for your pressure. Take me in,
Take me in, Laura, to your very heart.
My hope, my life, lie there. Immortal eyes,
Deign to look up and love me.

Laura. Love what, then? Thou hast a soul and body; shall I love



Forte St. Imbert, Avignon.





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A Sected of Pararoli.

All their content? Ah no, for thou hast said
Much in them is not of Love's way, but goes
Awandering in the weeds, wallows in mire.
Haply thy studies help thee, are a path
To finer thoughts, and may Love tune them
well.

But he wants all of thee, and that resolve
That keeps a man to virtue. No clean soul
Can dwell in a foul body. Ah, those eyes,
Thou knowest full well why they are half-shut
eyes,

And I perforce am haughty. Say no more.

Nor think I'd lesson thee. I, too, am frail
In my retired life and hateful prison,
And have to pray forgiveness. O, I wish
We two could help each other! O, 't is sad!

Pet. Darling, look here.—a little sketch

Pet. Darling, look here, — a little sketch I made

To bring you for a present. Do you see
Whence it was taken? I sat full in front
Of the big rock. You will remember
The little chapel of St. Victor, perched
Like a bird resting; and right down below
There is a heron catching a small trout.
Good Philip lent me this of Cavaillon.
I think he loves you well, and aye insists
On having copies of the verses writ

Unto Lauretta by a certain lover.

He hath lent me these, too, of old Arles,

And this of Orange. Do they please you,

Laurie?

Laura. Ah, good old man,—I wish I might say, Uncle.³¹

And so he sees the verses, no doubt hears

Others who sing them, if report be true.

I did not know you sketched, though now I mind

You have spoken to me of art, especially
When Memmi came to paint me. None I
see,

Save the church frescoes; but I love the air And the blue sky; and strange long distances Within the forest, which do seem to draw My soul right outwards.

Pet. Shall I tell you now Some story? And let me hold dear hand the while.

He moves nearer to her.

Laura. Nay, nay; keep where you were; these eyes, these eyes—

[Lowers her veil.

Pet. O veil, O enemy! I will indeed be good

If you will put it back.



Arc de Cavaillon.





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Nor can two contraries agree, without Great strife to join them. All the chiefs of state,

The legates, prefects, presidents, arrived,
And sought to see and mend him. He remained

Alone in the death chamber, with closed doors. Clinging to her poor body, talking to it, As it were still alive; told it his cares, The business of his sorrow; cooed and sighed And wept,—tears ever do companion love. Such was his state, in other things most wise; Such the dread consolation of the King. Now, as they tell, the Bishop of Cologne, Staying at that time at the royal château (A man for piety and judgment famed, First of the court and council of the King). Grieved for his lord's condition, and aware That human remedies had no avail. Prayed without ceasing unto God for him That this dread trouble might be made to end.

And after a tried patience came good cheer;
For a voice fell from heaven, — Under her
tongue

Seek thou and find the cause of the King's ill. So he, the retiral over, went forthwith Unto the chamber (having free access),

Felt in the corpse's mouth, and 'neath the tongue

Found a small gem ring, which he took away.

Thereafter came the King, and, seeing the body,

Took horror at it, and gave order for a grave.

Then straight he made the bishop a strange friend,

Most intimate of intimates; alone
Of him would take his counsel; would not part
From him by day or night. So the good man
Feeling that burden great, though envied much,
And dreading lest the ring in other hands,
Or even burned, should injure his dear lord,
Threw it into the deepest of a pool
That lay quite near the city. It so chanced
The King with some great nobles went to stay
Near that same pool; and he averred the air
That rose from it most sweetest, and to drink
The water was a wonder, and to bask
Upon its bank, pure pleasure. Therefore, soon
He took his court there, and midmost of the
marsh

Built at great cost a palace and a temple, So that no call of earth or meed of heaven Should draw him from a place now loved so well.

What years remained, he lived there,—there was buried.

But, ere he died, he willed that those who took
The sceptre after him should at that place
Be crowned in chief, and there receive the first
Homage of empire. And indeed they keep
Unto this day that solemn ordinance;
And shall, as long as Teuton hand may grasp
The Roman bridle.

Laura. Think you this was true?

Pet. Somewhat, perhaps; but I am much in doubt.

The priests showed me some writings, temple and tomb,

And I have read the tale in modern books. 'Tis pleasant in the telling.

Laura. A strange thing,

Some legend of an ancient amulet,

Altered, perhaps, through ages. Why should love

Be bound to any ring? My soul doth hope
To leave all bondage one day, save that one,—
Ah me! not then a bondage. But I know
Love works in many most mysterious ways.
Perhaps some passionate soul that yearned too
long,

And could not speak its agony, dwelt in the ring.

Tell me some sweeter story.

Pet. Ay, madonna, Unto the sweetest listener. This is Greek:—

THE STORY OF ORPHEUS

In olden time lived Orpheus, skilled in lore
Of heaven and earth; and so supremely wise,
He could appease the anger of the gods,
And cure most dire diseases; he could augur
By flight of birds the mind of deity,
And by his art read the masked souls of men.
So well he played the lyre, that rocks moved
forth

To do him reverence; roots of giant trees Became as walking limbs; and wild beasts stood

Letting their prey escape; storms became fair,
And torrents stayed to be his auditors.
He knew the force of that hid Love that works
And animates all things with plastic touch
Unto eternal issues; even the grave
For him held not a secret.

Laura.

Did he love?

Pet. Ay me, indeed! His wife Eurydice
Was unto him as his own soul; most sweet
And utterly beautiful; instant in all mood
Of that fair duty that so charms a man
And makes his life a pleasance. But soon came
The bitter touch that mars all human joy.
For Aristæus, the half-brother, seeing
How rare she was above all womankind,
Would fain have ravished her; but she took
flight

Through by-paths of the wood, and so escaped. Alas, another serpent, keener still,

There stung her to her death. Then Orpheus wailed,

And, wailing long, by many a devious track
That led through depths of utmost Tænarus,
Descended into hell. And there he played
Such magic with his lyre, such harmonies
Of voiced beseechment, that the inexorable gods
At last gave way, and yielded back his wife,—
Ay, but on one condition,—Look thou back
Ere ye win home, and she is lost for aye.
Then Orpheus took his lyre, and, tuning it
Unto all joyous stops, went forth in front,
And she, glad with the singing, followed him.
But as they went most happy, thoughts of
home

And household fires came on them, and they saw

Their lambs deep meadowed at their silly play,
And birds achant with many a wonted song,
And kindred smiling welcomes at their door.
But as they reached hell's mouth, the player
ceased,

To listen for her sandals; and, not hearing
Their pitpat on the rocks, looked round and said,
Come on, O sweetest, for the daylight's near.
But all he saw was her evanishment;
And all he heard, voices in friendly wail,
And mocking demons shouting Lost, lost, lost.
So went he home, a lonely silent man;
But left the lute upon the mouth of hell.

Laura. Poor wife and husband! So in old time, we know,

A grim condition bound both Adam and Eve. Is there no lesson in the story?

Pet. O love,

Haply it means that uttermost human force
Avails not against God; also that yearning
May grow into a crime. Take heed, O heart,
Before thou live thy prayer. Better to wait
And take what comes, though its deep roots be
torn,

And many a scar of agony be left;
For the enduring righteous man not late
Shall enter on fruition of his joy,
Remaining whole for ever.

Laura. That would I. For all things in this world have their alloy.

And I am keen—perhaps too keen—to find
The natural imperfections of our ways;
But ever do contrast them with that heaven
Where, undisturbed with sin or any taint,
And with no sense of disagreement,—ay,
And where there is no "other,"—all is calm,
Sweet reverence, and infinite delight.
Would it were soon, were soon. Ah me! this
prison.

Now tell me one more tale,—the last to-day.

Pet. Then it shall be a legend of early
Rome.

LUCRETIA

Tarquin the Proud, a murderer, had usurped The sway and title of a Roman king, And thereby made a many enemies. It happened that he led a mighty siege Of Ardea, a town in Latium. His sons were with him, and his younger nobles.

Among the former, Sextus stood the chief;

Among the latter, honest Collatine.

At Sextus' supper, many a story passed,

And many a merry jest; and the strong wine,

Untempered, went too fast and made them hot.

At last, as some grim devil would have it, Ho!

Saith Sextus, here we are alone, my friends;

We left our wives behind us. What say you?

What are they doing now? And first the one

And then the other said, All that is fair

And virtuous in the doing. Collatine,

With this not quite content, must needs praise

higher

His own wife, whom he loved, Lucretia,
As one o'er all incomparably chaste.
Then the young company began to wager;
And, in that mood, they on a sudden (urged
By whom or what hath never yet been known),
Posted to Rome and saw their wives in turn.
The hour was late. There first they found,
indeed,

Lucretia spinning calm among her maids; But all the others were asport,—at dance, Or revelling in some mad, silly way. So Collatine with his wife won the stakes. Had all but ended there, alas, alas!

All rode back to the camp; but Sextus, fired With fair Lucretia's beauty, took design To ravish her. A day or two went by, And he on some excuse went back to town At eventide, and halted at her door. Poor innocent! She, deeming naught amiss, Took him within the hall, and bade her slaves Make him a banquet, as beseemed his rank. Meanwhile she spoke him very courteously, And asked him of the war, and all his kin, And what should happen when the siege was o'er,

And how the markets went, and who was born, Who dead, and all the small talk of the time. At last she told the steward to conduct him Into a chamber, and so said good-night. But in that night the villain traitor Sextus, While all the household lay in utter sleep, Went to the inner chamber where she lay, And violently broke her to his will.

O, it was foul! But soon the insulted hours (For these take cognisance of human things)

Pressed on and made for her revenge. The

Rose with a weeping sky, and thunders went Back with that fiend to Ardea. Him pursued Messengers for her husband, for her father, As in dire urgence. These came riding in,
With Brutus' and Valerius' company,
And found her robed in mourning, but her face
Blanched with all woe, a dagger in her hand.
Husband, quoth she, and father, and ye friends
Since my young childhood, one hath done me
wrong,

And to yourselves irreparable wrong.

Swear that ye will avenge it. Then she told

Of all her struggle, how she reasoned hard

And would have stayed him; some poor useless

guile

Also she tried; how he threatened to slay
Some slave and bed with her; how at the last,
Tired with her constancy, he gave her blows
And did his purpose. So they swore revenge,
And said, Now name him; and she gave his
name.

Then they, at first of anger, made wild plans,
And had great mind to ride back to the camp
And slay him unawares. She, taking breath,
Would have them wait awhile. For think, said
she,

Unto what pass I am come. A shame, a shame Sits upon me for ever. O, my husband, How couldst thou lie on this defiled bosom Henceforth, or kiss me with thy wonted kiss,

Or deem me worthy mother of your babes,
Or fit to meet the greeting of your kin?
O, I can see the low suspicious glance,
And mark the tolerance merging into scorn,
And all my life grown worse than any death.
Therefore, behold, I have sought out a friend
That shall deliver me at once, and take
My soul with no more suffering to the gods.
Forgive me, and farewell.

With this, she struck
The dagger in her breast, and so fell down
Love's martyr at their feet. They took her forth
And set her in the crossways, where all folk
Could mark and question. What revenge they
had,

I know not; but the people rose in wrath, And thrust out every Tarquin from the realm.

Laura. All this from one carouse and heated blood!

It is a tragic tale; on the one hand Their folly, and his madness; on the other, Her pure nobility and constancy. But note you not the flaw within the drama?

Pet. Nay, it seems fair, well rounded.

Laura.

O, not that.

A woman, a supreme heroic woman,

In such an instant of high uttermost virtue, Why needed she the steel? Could not her will In one self-gathered, absolute command, Have broken her heart in two?

Pet. So it had been

With my own Laura, were there Lauras then. But it hath taken eighteen hundred years To make thee, sweetie.

Laura. Nay, nay, flatterer.

But see, the twilight fades; we have lingered late.

Good-bye now.

[They rise.

Pet. But a little respite, darling, For I have kept back a sad piece of news; Sad unto me; for thee,—O, is it sad? I leave thee for some time.

Laura. Who hath done this? What is it takes my faithful friend away? Tell me, now, tell me.

Pet. Dear, I go to Rome.

Laura. Again?

Pet. Ay, once more, and this time the last.

I feel the old inexorable unrest
And I must wander forth. 'Twill not be long,—
Two months, perhaps; much cause there is this time.

The sacred city is in ferment,—free
At length, perhaps; Rienzi, at the head
Of the old civic statehood now renewed,
Hath made some order, and the time is new,
New with fair promise of a lusty youth.
I know the man, and must be there to see;
It may be, too, to counsel. Noble minds,
High matters are in prospect; and the world
Stands waiting for their coming. But for thee,
My noblest, I had been a grovelling fool,
Nor cared for such grand issues, nor the men
Who shape the first fair plans of liberty.

Laura. When go you?

Pet. In three days.

Laura. It may be well For you, and doubtless—Rome. I shall be here Leading the life you know I ever lead. I think I am growing old.

Pet. And if so, dear, Have we not aged together? But you have No silver hairs, and I am crowned with them.

Laura. Yes,—we have been together. Of late

I have had strange thoughts, feeling myself more weak

Than ever before; and doubt much if these eyes

You love so much will see you once again,— Once more,—again.

Pet. But that presentiment
You had in your two illnesses, and then
It proved unfounded.

Laura. 'Twill not be so now.

I cannot tell you all; 'tis different And certain.

Pet. O sweetest, be of better cheer. O stay, Heart of my heart; thou art my spring,—the source

Of all my best. Without thee, life were lone, Too lone for me,—mere waiting for my death. I could not bear it, cannot think it so. Give me your hands, dear love.

O, holding these,

How can I think such parting? Open those lids,

My own, as one last favour. Looking there, How can I think thee mortal?

Laura. Ah, too sure,

Too sure.

Pet. Dearest, were this indeed the last Of all our love, O what should it be now? Think of our little dainty words we know Secret between ourselves; the many hours Of dear, dear intercourse; your pretty play

When you were younger, and your coy remarks, Looks so demure, and wise considerations; And O, the sweet enchantment of your song! And what will come of that most naughty coif, The fairy enemy of pleading looks, And all the tales that still remain in store, And, what I have been hoping more of late, A freer utterance of my inmost thoughts. For love that is pure love walks hand in hand With chastity; and we, now nearer mates, Might without sin have spoken all our mind. But if this be the last hour, what is left Of comfort to me, or of any hope? Say me one sweetest, dearest word of love.

Laura. What can I say? Thou knowest what I would say.

Let it suffice that we are hand in hand
In chastity, as thou hast said. But if I go,
As seems most clear indeed that I must go,
My soul will come to thee the day I die,
And tell thee, give thee comfort;—and on that
day

Say thee all sweetest, dearest words of love. Farewell, farewell.

Pet. Then O, farewell, my heart. The night is on my soul. O not for long. Dark eyes, O take my soul within to rest,

And treasure it until I soon return.

Sweet face, you go with me where'er I go.

Good-bye. One look,—one more.

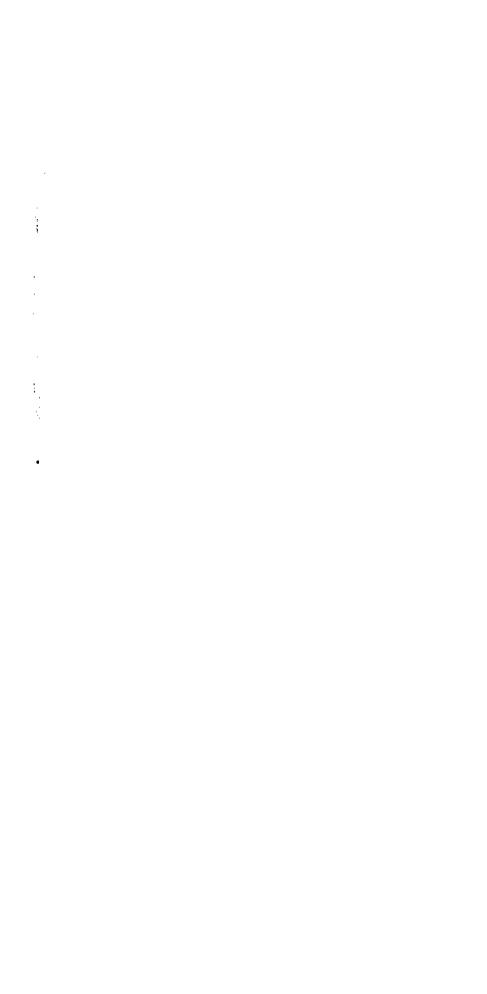
[They part.

I saw two tears

Fall from her trembling eyelids, when I said
That I must leave her. O she loves me, sure.
But she is weaker than she thinks she is.
Haply God takes me far, in providence
Lest she should die. I could not see her die;
I should die too. God keep her yet. And now
I go to Avignon to make final plans
And speed me for the journey. I will lay
Command upon good Ludwig that he write
Instantly, if she ails much; and should it be,
I will return,—and so her body and mine
Shall lie at last together in one grave. Amen.



PART IV AT VERONA AND SORGA



PART IV

AT VERONA AND SORGA

AH me! the terror of that dreadful night! 38 True to her promise (she was ever true) She came to me in sleep before the morn, When the encumbered air grows fresh and light, And, holding forth that hand so long denied, Touched me with her eternal sweetness. "Lo. I come, who drew thee from the common path Unto an inward life-I have passed out From that dark prison to the world of joy; Mourn not; but, if it may be, joy with me. Death is a little sigh to weary souls,-No more. For I was weary-weary indeed, Though it was well to be thy comfort; well My beauty pleased thee; well I had the gift To guide thee somewhat higher." "O, madonna, Tell me, by that same faith I had for you, Now seen most clear in God's own countenance, Did your heart love me? For you racked me sore

With change of anger, scorn, and that sweet peace

That dwelt in happy eyes." O, then she smiled The flashing angel-smile, that used to sun My lifelong misery. "My heart was bound To thee, dear lover, always; will be bound For ever; but need was to temper thee And thy too pressing ardour by my mien. No other plan there was to save us both And our young honour. O, how oft I said He loves me, — nay, he burns; he cannot heed,

I must take heed for both. Therefore I seemed Severe at times, but not always severe,
Nor was my tenderness too long restrained:
And so I saved our lives and honour too.
And did I love thee? Ay, I loved thee well,
And clasped thee round my heart for very

Pleased, too, in thine own pleasure of sweet verse

Sung of my name, now known both near and far.

All that did lack was thy self-governance.

Would, for thy sake, I had been born elsewhere.

In some famed city equal to thy fame,

And better worth thy song; had it but been
Nearer thy nest of flowers! But yet the place
Hath a rare natural beauty; in another
I might have passed thy love." "Nay, never
that;

Fate must have brought us near, no matter where;

The third sphere draws its kind." But now came on

Young peeps of golden morning; gently she
Took me with either hand, and opening wide
Her glorious and angelic eyes, said this:—
"Dear love, thou wilt remain some time
behind

Without me; while thou waitest, think I watch
And wait unto thee, thee alone, one day
To be thy welcome home, if thou canst keep
Pure faith, and if thou do transgress no
more."

This said, she parted, with a sweet—sweet smile Of uttermost ravishment, and I saw no more.

My twenty-one years' love, now dead, now dead!

And this from Socrates, of how she passed. His tears are in the writing,—so are mine.

[Reads.

HER DEATH

"The spirit parting from that glorious breast "With all its virtues, in itself withdrawn, Made a great stillness where it clove the sky. Never a hostile demon dared to come "With dreadful presence and a low'ring look, When Death had once delivered his assault. Then those who watched, dismissing plaint and fear,

Only upon her face became intent,
Anxious no more through very loss of hope.
Not as a flame spent by some outer force,
But of itself consuming its own self,
The sated soul retired in perfect peace.
It was in guise of some soft brilliant light
That slowly—slowly fails of nutriment,
But keeps its wonted radiance to the end.
Wan she was not, but whiter than the snow
Whose flakes have settled on a fair hillside
Where winds are hushed, she seemed to take
her rest

As one tired out. Dying—ah, foolish word—Was like a sweet sleep in her noble eyes, Which came upon them when the spirit left. Death on her lovely face seemed lovely too."

DEATH'S QUESTIONS

What shall I do? O Love, on thee I call. It is full time to die. And I have lingered longer than I would. My lady, with my heart, is in death's thrall. Follow most fain would I, And fitly break these years that are no

good.

Hope hath lost certitude

Save not to see her here, and will not wait.

My joy so long, so late, By her departure hath been turned to woe, My life bereft of all its sweetness so.

II

Love, thou dost feel, and I do grieve with thee, How keen and sad that loss: Sure am I that my sorrow bends thee low, Rather our sorrow; for in the same rough

One rock we broke across; In the same moment down our sun did go. Nor lives he who may show

Such words as mate this agony of mind.

O world ungrateful, blind!

Wail with much reason, for I can aver

All beauty that thou hadst is gone with her.

Ш

Thy glory is fallen, and thou didst not weet.

Nor, while she stayed below,

Didst thou deserve to learn what prize was
there:

No, nor be trodden by her holy feet.

A thing so choice to know

Was destined only to make heaven more fair.

But I, alas, who dare

Without her love not life nor my own soul,

Recall her in my dole.

This leads me onward with such hope as may;

This only brings relief upon my way.

tν

Alas, that lovely face hath changed its guise, Which told a faithful tale Of heaven and what is the supernal good. Her unseen figure is in Paradise, Dissevered from the veil Which shaded her best years of womanhood:

Again to be indued, And not to be divested evermore: But, fairer than before, She will assume such far diviner powers, As that immortal beauty passes ours.

Now lovelier and more winsome than of old, She turns with tenderer aim

To me, where she can most delight impart.

This is one prop that doth my life uphold; And one her sunny name,

Which makes sweet music in my grieving heart.

But the returning smart

Reminds me that my hope is dead, which grew

Only when she lived too.

Love knows what I am now, and she sees clear

Who dwells at home with Truth in his own sphere.

VI

Ladies, who watched her beauty in past days,

And that angelic life

Which showed on earth what heavenly manners are,

For me you weep and pity binds your ways;

Not for her, far from strife

And in great peace, while I am left in war;

Such that, if much else bar

The track whereby I might have followed her,

I do to Love defer,

Only to Love,—nor cut the thread in twain.

But he pleads inwardly, and in this strain;—

VII

Curb the great grief which now too far hath gone;

For longing limitless

Will lose that heaven whereto thy heart bids free,

Where she, who seems to others dead, lives on,

And for her lovely dress 36

Smiles to herself and only sighs for thee;
But prays her fame still be
Diffused in many a region by thy song,
Ay, die not, but live long;
Rather the voice that names her grow more clear,

If ever those grand eyes were sweet and dear.

Quit every calm green spot,

My poesie; go near no chant or smile, But sorrow a long, long while;

> Not thine to mingle with glad hearts and deeds,—

> A widow, comfortless, in mourning weeds.

There is but one relief,—alone with her
To muse of all she was, to muse and rime.
Come, gentle spirit, teach me what shall be
Noble and worthy to remain; what air
To paint upon the picture; how to draw
What may be of this unexampled grief,
And strike new music into holy words,—
An angel's elegy. Ah me, ah me!
The world is poorer now.

A MESSAGE

- Go, wailing verses, to the unfeeling stone
 Which my loved treasure in the earth
 o'erlies:
 - There call on her who answers from the skies,
 - Though dark and deep her mortal part is sown.
- Tell her I am already weary grown,
 - Sailing where passion's dreadful billows rise; 37
 - But gathering up her scattered leaves for prize,
 - I come behind her, step by step, alone.
- Singing of her, none else, alive or dead,

 Nay, living still in an immortal sphere,

 That all the world may know her and may love:
- So, when I soon pass o'er, may she take heed,
 And come to meet me as her heavenly peer,
 And call and draw me to her seat above.

HER COMPANY

Where bides the plaint of birds and green boughs grow,

That sway soft-rustled on the summer air,

And the hoarse murmur of the bright waves' flow

Comes to a bank so cool with flowers so fair,

I sit with pensive love-thoughts, writing there.

Heaven's sample once, then hid in earth below,

Keeps touch with me; and by her living care,

From that far seat my sighs their answer know.

Why waste thy manhood ere the time beseem?

She pitying says to me; Why ceaseless rise

These tears too sad, in lamentable stream?

Weep not for me, my days in death's own wise Became eternal; in the eternal beam,

When I did feign to close, I oped mine eyes.

HER PILGRIM

If I had thought that these could win such praise,

These voices of my sighs in drift of rime,
I should have made them, from that first
sad time,

Oftener indeed, and in more dainty ways.

Dead is my love, the cause of all my lays,

Who in my thoughts for ever stood sublime; Nor can I now (ah, touch of that sweet prime!)

Charge rough dark verse with clear and gentle traits.

- Sooth, all my aims had then a single goal,—
 Only to find my mournful heart relief
 In some way, for towards fame they never
 bent:
- I sought to weep, and not renown from grief.

 Now I were fain to please, that lofty soul

 Calls me dumb, weary, by the way she

 went.

HER DOWRY

I knew, when these eyes opened of heaven's grace,

So far as lore and Love had raised my wings,

Wonders of beauty, yet mere mortal things Scattered by every star on one sweet place.

Others as many, strange, of different race,

High natures from divine-immortal springs, Because not even with his thought who sings,

My feeble vision could not bear to face.

Whence was all of her I could speak or write,
Who now with God my praise in prayers
returns,

Too brief,—a drop to depths most infinite:

Art cannot stretch beyond what mind discerns;

And he who on the sun had fixed his sight,

The less can see, the more its brilliance burns.

HER HOME

I soared in thought to that far country, where

She dwelt whom here I seek with vain request;

There, among those in the third circle prest,

I saw her lovelier yet, and less severe.

She took my hand and said, In this same sphere

We yet shall meet, so thou have not transgressed;

I am that one who gave thee such unrest, And closed my day before the eve drew near.

My weal no human intellect can grasp;

Thee only I await, and that fair veil

Left there, whereunto thy great love was given.

Ah, why ceased she? Why did her hand unclasp?

Her chaste words told so pitiful a tale,

A little more, I should have stayed in heaven.

LOST HOPE

All the bright joy that youth and spring express Had passed away; I felt the blaze burn low

That once had scorched my heart; I came to know

Life's summit, whence it slopes to nothingness.

Now she began to trouble less and less,—
She, my dear enemy,—on guard and slow,—
As to her doubts of me; my bitter woe
Was turned to sport by her pure faithfulness.

The time drew near when Love goes hand in hand

With Chastity; and lovers, as of right, Sit side by side and speak their hearts' demand.

Death bore ill-will to such supreme delight

Before my hope had fruit; and took his

stand

Half way, with hostile face and armed might.

THE NIGHTINGALE

- My pretty bird, that art to sing so prone,

 Or sooth, ent blest time of late,

 Seeing the night and dreary winter wait,

 The day far past, the merry months now

 flown;
- If, as to thee thy weight of grief is known,

 Thou likewise knewest of my kindred state,

 Thou'dst to my lap, who am disconsolate,

 To share with me these notes so sad and
 lone.
- I know not of our lots if we be peers;

 She lives, perhaps, for whom thy plaints arise.
 - That life which death and heaven begrudge my tears:
- But autumn's wane, this hour of sombre skies,

 And memory of those sweet and bitter

 years,
 - Draw me to speak with thee in piteous wise.

AT SORGA

Valley so full of my lamenting cries,
River that often with my plaint doth grow,
Wild creatures, pretty birds, and fish that
know

Those two green banks which from the Sorga rise;

Warm placid wind, tempered by these sad sighs, Sweet path, that issuest in bitter woe, Hill that once pleased me, now displeasing so.

Whither Love draws me in his wonted wise:

I mark your mood's sweet custom as of yore;

Mine is, alas, how changed; my life so
glad

Harbours nought now but infinite distress.

Hence I would watch my bliss; this track looks o'er

Her place whence she arose to heaven unclad,

Leaving on earth her lovely cast-off dress.

FIRST VISION

Her golden tresses were let loose to air **

Which in sweet sport a thousand knots would blow;

From her grand eyes beamed forth in burning glow

The immeasurable blaze, now scant and rare.

If her face flushed, perhaps with pitying care,

I may have been deceived to take it so;

But Love had laid his train too long ago;

What wonder that it caught with sudden flare?

When she walked forth, 't was not in mortal guise,

But in an angel's mode; she spoke as one Whose voice had other than a human sound;

A heavenly spirit and a dazzling sun
Indeed I saw; and if such grace now dies,
The bow's undoing does not heal the
wound.

GOOD-BYE

Beautiful soul, set free from those near ties, Lovelier than which deft nature weaveth not.

Give heed from heaven unto my sunless lot, Where joyous moods are changed for doleful cries.

Thy heart is rid of that untrue surmise,

Whence was sometimes with cruel sternness fraught

Thy countenance so sweet; now, fearing nought,

Turn to me that dear glance and hear my sighs.

See that huge rock whence Sorga's river springs, And one who wends o'er fields and brooks, alone.

Feeds on thy memory and mournful things. Where stands thy house, and where was born and known

Our love; for lo, a last farewell he brings, Not fain to view what grieved thee, 'mid thine own.

Oh, I have had strange, unique experience!

Was ever love like mine,—like ours, like ours?

She took me from the dunghill of the world,

And set me high, and gave me noble mind.

What man had e'er such training? No graybeard

With frosty top and ponderous step and slow,
But a girl angel, far beyond compare
The loveliest face created, with a soul
Ordered in heavenly ways, and delicate
With touch of finest instinct; a religion
In her own life; that secret force that stays
A man's soul in the stress of all his war:
A saint, a benediction. O, how apt she was!
Though a recluse, yet if rare incident
Threw her in unforeknown society,
There, as to the manner born of perfect ladies,
She met great ladies in her dignity,
And passed with all due honour. They may
miss.

Perhaps their sweet superior from this way.

And now my mind goes back to April time

And that first day I saw her; when the wind

Tossed her gold hair in tangles, and she sang

Soft to herself, and knew not that I heard:

And when she saw me, spoke all frankly forth

And laughed, as innocence is wont. Ah me!

But now I go into the world alone, Restless as ever, and a mourner now; Rather a pilgrim to that heaven where she Rests in the juvenescence of her morn, And in her home awaits me. Now I know That, should I draw apart, the reins will pull Me wandering to the better path again. Pray God I die at work. And so the time Seems shortening. My pen hath much to do, But chiefest in her memory; such verse As best may fit it, better than before As death than life is better, and as heaven Than earth.

Come then, O sweet, be with me; unto thee As to my Sun I turn; illuminate The long dark night with splendour. Sorrow's night

Is for the soul to think in undisturbed, And have the sense of kinship with all being. I shall grow part of thee, and thou in me, Till that last night when we shall be made one, Nay, not as in the passion I desired When once my flesh burned hot; but perfect, calm.

And in an extasy that needs no words, Beyond all bounds unbounded. Who can tell, Now that thou art pure spirit, what may hap

To me for ever seeking? Whispers in the night,

Or voices in the visions of the dawn, Soft sighs when I am lonely 'mid the trees. And not a leaf is rustling; an evanishment Of fluttering vesture when the sunset fades,-O, I shall be alert! And even now I feel within me new intelligence Of grandeur, deeper power; my heart, uptorn By all its roots, lets in a space of sky Unseen before: and somehow on there comes A sense of air and vastness. Ay, I find Insight doth follow grief. Nature, methinks, Must also be a lover. What I write Shall be for love, and grief,—and might of hope That vanquishes all death.—My heart is yours, Our heart is yours, who heed these scattered rimes.

Now here at old Vaucluse, alas! she lies
On the side opposite her cottage there,—
A stone with no inscription. I shall make
My years her one inscription, and all years
Shall tell her epitaph and elegy.
"Road of the Dead" they call it,—not ill-named
After that awful pestilence. Now Caumont holds
A shrine sacred for ever. Bare it is,

And has a tinge of utter solitude,

Now, in the strength of day—What of the
night?

Do not her missioned angels stand on guard With bowed heads, folded wings, and half-closed eyes,

Remembering, pondering of her life,

Lest some foul demon, happening to pass,

Defile her grave and mar her perfect rest?

I think there is a grave within my heart;

For I go reverently now, a man

Changed in all ways, and earnest with the sun;

And in that grave I see my saint at peace,

And peace comes on me, and a soul of prayer.

Well, now for one more sight of the old farm,

Though I will linger not, not fain to see

Her long displeasure; and the odious dogs

Shall howl in vain this time. Turn north, old

nag,

Up the sweet valley to my little den;
There will we sleep to-night. All looks the same,

The river runs for ever on before;
The fish are leaping as of wont; I see
Wild things skulk off within the wood, as when
I hunted long ago. And ah, the hills,
And hoary Ventoux crowning all the vale.

The same,—'tis I have changed. For now I know,

Before I knew not; now I see the world
Through other eyes, and feel with altered touch.
There's an eternal something come to me,—
Strange, I cannot defend only I know
It came with sorrow, and es not away.

Night comes upon my and I must sleep.

[He sleeps. The spirit of Laura approaches.

Laura. Sleep, O unrested soul, my heart to thine.

For now I come new taught, and yet the same,
Though a pure spirit, as when of old we met
And held our frequent converse. I am here,
Permitted to aver thee sweet farewells.
For not again wilt thou see me thy mate,
Until thy journey on the earth is done.
O, but I love thee, dear, thee, thee alone,
And I await no other. I will go
Unseen, though haply felt, all the long way,
As mortals count their years. For as the air
Makes music in the branches of the trees
Or shakes the tense-strung harp of many strings
With crescent period of wavy pulse;
Or as the sea doth moisten every marge,
And bring fair plenty on a loving lip;

So will I be round thee, and wide as they.

And, for the time is brief, hear, O my heart,

Of that whereof I better understand,

Since my eyes oped in heaven. I know thy

flesh

Tormenteth thee full sore, and being a woman I was intolerant of yore for that,

Nor held thee in due mercy. Was I harsh? If so, forgive me, though I meant it well. Yet but for that my soul had sooner left The trammels of the world. Now Nemesis Will find thee in the son that thou hast loved, And darken all thy being for many a year. Thou wilt remain five lustres. Fame will come, And that distress called glory; but with age Those and the carnal mind will lose their power;

And we shall blend once more as mate to mate,—

Rather as somewhat that no words can tell.

I shall companion all thy wanderings.

Florence will make thee restitution late,
Paying the son the exiled father's debt.

So Milan, Prague and Padua, Venice,
Will hold thy feet fair housed; thou shalt be great,

And move the first among the greatest, first

Of that grand time that soon will dawn on men.
Use thy gifts well, and thy occasions well.
But unto this be warned, thy faithful friends
May not resist an earlier doom than thine,
And thou wilt be long lonely. But at last,
In a sweet centre of the Euganean hills,
Where the air softens as in old Vaucluse,
And helped by tendance of a daughter's love,
Thou'lt pass from night to morn. That morn
shall I

Meet thee in thy white robe, and every star
Shall sing us happy; the angelic choir
Shall chant the lofty union of the blest,
And we shall gather glory in their heaven;
For we shall be One Soul, to part no more,
But circle round the feet of living Love.
And now the night wanes fast; a longer night
Draws on to thee, dear heart; long longer

And with no middle vision of my face.

I cannot say farewell; but heed the end,—
One Soul immortal for immortal Love.

night,

NOTES



NOTES

- ¹ Petrarch set aside this sonnet for many years, as unsatisfactory; but afterwards finished it more to his pleasure. It is curious that he should state the exact hour (ora prima—apunto). The day was Monday.
- ² The eyes were at that time supposed to go first.
- ³ At the time of my visit, the custodian assured me that two Lauras were buried there, and that either was equally available for historical purposes.
- * Mémoires pour la vie de François Pétrarque, 3 vols., Amsterdam, 1764.
- ⁵ Petrarch gives an account of his home-life at Vaucluse in the Latin Poetical Epistles to James and John Colonna and William of Pastrengo.
- ⁶ Many details of this kind are to be found in Petrarch's Epistle to Posterity.
- ⁷ Benedict XII., elected Pope in 1334. The popes were at Avignon in Petrarch's time.

- ⁸ Bishop of Cavaillon, and subsequently Cardinal.
- Petrarch expressly says that he lived on the right bank of the stream. The present supposed Château de Pétrarque is on the opposite side, and belonged to the Bishops of Cavaillon: it is now in ruins.
 - ¹⁰ The chapel of St. Victor, not now in existence.
- ¹¹ Babylon was Petrarch's favourite name of contempt for Avignon.
- ¹⁸ Socrates was Petrarch's pet name for Ludovicus, a native of Holland, resident at Avignon. He was extremely intimate with the poet.
- ¹⁸ Petrarch gives these particulars in a letter to his brother.
- ¹⁴ The highest mountain in the district. Petrarch once ascended it with his brother.
 - 15 "Obsidet amica fores."
- ¹⁶ This curious denunciation doubtless reflects Petrarch's mind or that of any cleric of that age very accurately. It occurs in a letter (*Fervet animus*, *Frac.*, iii. 509) long attributed to Petrarch, but now known to have been the work of his secretary Lombardo.

- ¹⁷ From a genuine letter of Petrarch's (Quid mihi, Frac., i. 454); this was doubtless the model of Lombardo's (12).
 - 18 Cf. the sonnet Onde tolse.
 - 19 Cf. Herrick's "freeze and frie."
 - 20 Pieverde near Caumont.
- ²¹ Il lume in cui Amor si trastulla. It is difficult to say which is the more beautiful,—Petrarch's sweetly sensuous line or our English "Love in her eyes sits playing."
- ²² Some have interpreted this allegorically. But the practice is indisputable. See Carducci in loc., also Boccaccio's Decameron, viii. 7.
- ²³ She is supposed to have lived with these aunts.
 - 24 The text is (A qualunque, 31, etc.),—

Con lei foss' io da che si parte il Sole, E non ci vedess' altri che le stelle; Sol una notte; e mai non fosse l'alba.

- 25 In general, about four hours.
- ²⁶ Delisle (Notice sur Un Livre Annoté par Pétrarque, 2201 Bib. Nat., 1896) reproduces two prayers of Petrarch, one much longer and

of earlier date than the other. I have selected the shorter, as likely to have been more frequently in use. The (Latin) text is,—

BREVIOR

1338, die 10 julii.

Salus mea, Christe Ihesu, si te ad misericordiam inclinare potest humana miseria, adesto michi misero et preces meas benignus exaudi, fac peregrinationem meam tibi placitam et gressus meos dirige in viam salutis eterne. Dignare michi in die exitus mei et in illa suprema hora mortis assistere, neque reminiscaris iniquitatum mearum, sed egredientem ex hoc corpusculo spiritum placatus excipias. Ne intres in judicium cum servo tuo, Domine, misericordiarum fons, misericorditer mecum age, cause mee faveas et deformitates meas contege in die novissimo, nec patiaris hanc animam, opus manuum tuarum, ad superbum tui et mei hostis imperium pervenire, aut predam fieri spiritibus immundis et famelicis canibus esse ludibrio, Deus meus, misericordia mea.

Omnipotens sempiterne Deus, ignosce metuentibus et parce supplicantibus, ut intereant noxii calores imbrium spiritusque procellarum; cedat ad honorem tue laudis comminatio tue majestatis. Per Christum Dominum nostrum. Amen.

Cf. Shakspeare, in Measure for Measure,

... and the delighted spirit

To bathe in fiery floods, ...

To be imprisoned in the viewless winds,

And blown with restless violence round about

The pendent world ...

(It is curious that the commentators should have missed the force of Shakspeare's "dē-lighted." It obviously means from which the light has been taken.) An old monkish tradition. Cf. 35

²⁷ Lady Rixende of Pieverde. Her name is given by Valori as a contemporary in a list of Dames of the Court of Love, Avignon. (La Nouvelle Revue, ciii. 490, 1896.)

²⁸ From a fuller prose version in Lina Eckenstein's Woman under Monasticism, p. 253.

29 Cupidasque manus frenare memento, Ecl. iii.

³⁰ Petrarch, though holding many preferments, did not proceed beyond deacon's orders.

⁸¹ There was at one time a tradition to that effect.

32 The story of the Love Ring is taken from a letter of Petrarch's, Frac., i. 41. An English

prose version will be found in Una Taylor's Early Italian Love Stories, p. 99.

- ** Paraphrased from the second part of the Triumph of Death.
 - * Translated from the same.
 - ECE Herrick, His Litanie,—

When the passing ball doth tole, And the Fusion in a shole Come to fright a parting soule; Supply spirit, comfort me!

- * Speglie,—Her dead body.
- Who sleeps at home; and sayling there at ease,
 Fears not the fierce sedition of the seas.
- * Written during Laura's life; but inserted here as still more appropriate to her mourning lover.

APPENDICES



APPENDICES

APPENDIX OF PLACE NAMES

Arles = Ar llaith, on the marsh. In Latin, Arelate.
This derivation is taken from Taylor.

Avignon = Avennou, rivers.

Cabassole = Kab or Kabau, houses, and seûl, high.

Cabrières = Kabau: ères, a place termination.

Carpentras = Caer pen traith, the camp at sand head. The name must have been given when the great plain to the west was for the most

part submerged.

Caumont = Koat maen, the wood of the (sacred) stone. This would be pronounced Covân. The Romans changed the name to Cavi Montes (enfolding hills). The modern survival seems to be a mixture.

Cavaillon = Kab and llion, a confluence. Here the

Colon joins the Durance.

Durance = Durenza = Du rhen, a black brook.

Gordes = Gored, a river fishery. Gord is modern French for a fishing-net.

Got = Koat, a wood.

Lagnes = Lann, a sacred enclosure.

Lumergue = Llum erch, the brown peak where the stream rises.

Pièverde = Piè verde, Green foot. Pronounced locally pē vār. An Italian corruption of perhaps pin ffair, chief market.

Rhone = Rhodanus—rhwt, to rout, and avon, water.

Sorga. The river is so named from the striking appearance of enclosure as one approaches Vaucluse from the south. Petrarch imagined the name to be derived from the high rock which blocks up the valley at the source. Argae (Welsh) and Kae (Breton) both mean an enclosure, or damming up (cf. arctus). According to Pliny, the early Roman invaders called the spring Fons Orgiæ. The s of the first word was subsequently run on to the second, which then became Sorga or Sorgia. In modern French, the stream is called La Sorgue.

APPENDIX OF ITALIAN TEXTS

LOVE'S OBSESSION

Solo, e pensoso i più deserti campi
Vo misurando a passi tardi e lenti,
E gli occhi porto, per fuggire, intenti
Dove vestigio uman l' arena stampi.
Altro schermo non trovo, che mi scampi
Dal manifesto accorger delle genti;
Perchè negli atti d' allegrezza spenti
Di fuor si legge com' io dentro avvampi:
Sì ch' io mi credo omai, che monti, e piagge,

E fiumi, e selve sappian di che tempre Sia la mia vita, ch' è celata altrui. Ma pur sì aspre vie, nè sì selvagge

Ma pur sì aspre vie, nè sì selvagge Cercar non so, ch' Amor non venga sempre Ragionando con meco, ed io con lui.

OF LAURA'S EYES

1

Gentil mia Donna, io veggio

Nel mover de' vostr' occhi un dolce lume,
Che mi mostra la via ch' al ciel conduce;
E per lungo costume
Dentro là dove sol con Amor seggio,
Quasi visibilmente il cor traluce.
Questa è la vista ch' a ben far m' induce,

E che mi scorge al glorïoso fine;
Questa sola dal vulgo m' allontana:
Nè già mai lingua umana
Contar poria quel che le due divine
Luci sentir mi fanno;
E quando 'l verno sparge le pruine,
E quando poi ringiovenisce l' anno,
Qual era al tempo del mio primo affanno.

H

Io penso: Se là suso
Onde 'l Motor eterno delle stelle
Degnò mostrar del suo lavoro in terra,
Son l' altr' opre sì belle,
Aprasi la prigione ov' io son chiuso
E che 'l camino a tal vita mi serra.
Poi mi rivolgo a la mia usata guerra,
Ringraziando Natura e 'l dì ch' io nacqui,
Che reservato m' hanno a tanto bene,
E lei, ch' a tanta spene
Alzò 'l mio cor; chè 'n sino allor io giacqui
A me noioso e grave;
Da quel dì innanzi a me medesmo piacqui,

Empiendo d'un pensier alto e soave Quel core ond' hanno i begli occhi la chiave.

III

Nè mai stato gioioso
Amore o la volubile Fortuna
Dieder a chi più fûr nel mondo amici,
Ch' i' no 'l cangiassi ad una
Rivolta d' occhi ond' ogni mio riposo
Vien, com' ogni arbor vien da sue radici.
Vaghe faville, angeliche, beatrici
De la mia vita, ove 'l piacer s' accende
Che dolcemente mi consuma e strugge;

APPENDIX OF ITALIAN TEXTS 201

Come sparisce e fugge
Ogni altro lume dove 'l vostro splende,
Così de lo mio core,
Quando tanta dolcezza in lui discende,
Ogni altra cosa, ogni pensier va fore,
E sol ivi con voi rimansi Amore.

IV

Quanta dolcezza unqu'anco
Fu in cor d' avventurosi amanti, accolta
Tutta in un loco, a quel ch' i' sento è nulla,
Quando voi alcuna volta
Soavemente tra 'l bel nero e 'l bianco
Volgete il lume in cui Amor si trastulla:
E credo, da le fasce e dalla culla
Al mio imperfetto, alla fortuna aversa
Questo rimedio provedesse il cielo.
Torto mi face il velo
E la man che sì spesso s' attraversa
Fra 'l mio sommo diletto
E gli occhi, onde dì e notte si rinversa
Il gran desio per isfogar il petto,
Che forma tien dal variato aspetto.

V

Perch' io veggio (e mi spiace)
Che natural mia dote a me non vale,
Nè mi fa degno d' un sì caro sguardo:
Sforzomi d' esser tale,
Qual a l' alta speranza si conface,
Et al foco gentil, ond' io tutt' ardo.
S' al ben veloce, et al contrario tardo,
Dispregiator di quanto 'l mondo brama,
Per solicito studio posso farme;
Potrebbe forse aitarme
Nel benigno judicio una tal fama.

Certo il fin de' miei pianti,
Che non altronde il cor doglioso chiama,
Vien da' begli occhi al fin dolce tremanti,
Ultima speme de' cortesi amanti.
Canzon; l' una sorella è poco innanzi,
E l' altra sento in quel medesmo albergo
Apparecchiarsi; ond' io più carta vergo.

LOVE'S MISSIONER

Rapido fiume, che d' alpestra vena
Rodendo intorno, onde 'l tuo nome prendi,
Notte e di meco disioso scendi
Ov' Amor me, te sol natura mena;
Vattene innanzi: il tuo corso non frena
Nè stanchezza, nè sonno: e pria che rendi
Suo dritto al mar, fiso, u' si mostri, attendi
L' erba più verde, e l' aria più serena:
Ivi è quel nostro vivo, e dolce sole
Ch' adorna, e 'nfiora la tua riva manca:
Forse (oh che spero?) il mio tardar le dole.
Baciale 'l piede, o la man bella e bianca:
Dille (el baciar sie 'n vece di parole)
Lo spirto è pronto, ma la carne è stanca.

MY STREAM

Chiare, fresche, e dolci acque,
Ove le belle membra
Pose colei che sola a me par donna;
Gentil ramo, ove piacque
(Con sospir mi rimembra)
A lei di fare al bel fianco colonna;
Erba, e fior, che la gonna

APPENDIX OF ITALIAN TEXTS 203

Leggiadra ricoverse Co l' angelico seno; Aer sacro sereno, Ove Amor co' begli occhi il cor m' aperse; Date udienza insieme A le dolenti mie parole estreme.

S' egli è pur mio destino,

E 'l Cielo in ciò s' adopra, Ch' Amor quest' occhi lagrimando chiuda; Qualche grazia il meschino Corpo fra voi ricopra, E torni l' alma al proprio albergo ignuda. La morte fia men cruda, Se questa spene porto A quel dubbioso passo: Chè lo spirito lasso Non poria mai 'n più riposato porto,

Nè 'n più tranquilla fossa Fuggir la carne travagliata, e l' ossa. Tempo verrà ancor forse Ch' a l' usato soggiorno

Torni la fera bella e mansueta; E là 'v' ella mi scòrse Nel benedetto giorno, Volga la vista disiosa e lieta, Cercandomi: et, o pièta! Già terra in fra le pietre Vedendo, Amor l'inspiri In guisa, che sospiri Sì dolcemente, che mercè m' impetre, E faccia forza al Cielo,

Asciugandosi gli occhi co 'l bel velo.

Da' be' rami scendea, (Dolce ne la memoria) Una pioggia di fior sovra 'l suo grembo; Et ella si sedea Umile in tanta gloria,

Coverta già de l' amoroso nembo: Qual fior cadea su 'l lembo, Qual su le treccie bionde. Ch' oro forbito e perle Eran quel dì a vederle: Qual si posava in terra, e qual sull' onde: Qual con un vago errore Girando parea dir: Qui regna Amore. Quante volte diss' io Allor pien di spavento, Costei per fermo nacque in paradiso! Così carco d' obblio Il divin portamento, E 'l volto, e le parole, e 'l dolce riso M' aveano, e sì diviso Da 'l imagine vera; Ch' i' dicea sospirando: Qui come venn' io, o quando? Ĉredendo esser in ciel, non là dov' era. Da indi in qua mi piace Quest' erba sì, ch' altrove non ho pace. Se tu avessi ornamenti quant' hai voglia, Potresti arditamente

LOVE'S ARREST

Uscir del bosco, e gir infra la gente.

Stiamo, Amor, a veder la gloria nostra, Cose sopra natura altere e nove: Vedi ben quanta in lei dolcezza piove; Vedi lume che 'l cielo in terra mostra.

Vedi quant' arte dora e 'mperla e 'nostra L' abito eletto e mai non visto altrove; Che dolcemente i piedi e gli occhi move Per questa di bei colli ombrosa chiostra.

APPENDIX OF ITALIAN TEXTS 20

- L' erbetta verde e i fior di color mille Sparsi sotto quell' elce antiqua e negra, Pregan pur che 'l bel piè li prema o tócchi;
- E 'l ciel di vaghe e lucide faville S' accende intorno, e 'n vista si rallegra D' esser fatto seren da sì begli occhi.

THE CAPTURE

Nova angeletta sovra l' ale accorta
Scese dal Cielo in su la fresca riva
Là 'nd' io passava sol per mio destino:
Poi che senza compagna e senza scorta
Mi vide, un laccio che di seta ordiva,
Tese fra l' erba ond' è verde il camino:
Allor fui preso, e non mi spiacque poi
Sì dolce lume uscia degli occhi suoi.

THE DEPARTING SPIRIT

Lo spirto per partir di quel bel seno, Con tutte sue virtuti in sè romito, Fatt' avea in quella parte il ciel sereno.

Nessun degli avversarj fu sì ardito

Ch' apparisse giammai con vista oscura, Fin che Morte il suo assalto ebbe fornito.

Poi che, deposto il pianto e la paura, Pur al bel viso era ciascuna intenta, E per desperazion fatta secura;

Non come fiamma che per forza è spenta, Ma che per sè medesma si consume, Se n' andò in pace l' anima contenta,

A guisa d' un soave e chiaro lume
Cui nutrimento a poco a poco manca;
Tenendo al fin il suo usato costume.
Pallida no, ma più che neve bianca,
Che senza vento in un bel colle fiocchi,
Parea posar come persona stanca.
Quasi un dolce dormir ne' suoi begli occhi,
Sendo lo spirto già da lei diviso,
Era quel che morir chiaman gli sciocchi.
Morte bella parea nel suo bel viso.

DEATH'S QUESTIONS

I

Che debb' io far? che mi consigli, Amore?

Tempo è ben di morire:

Et ho tardato più ch' i' non vorrei.

Madonna è morta, et ha seco 'l mio core;

E volendo 'l seguire,

Interromper convèn quest' anni rei:

Perchè mai veder lei

Di qua non spero, e l' aspettar m' è noia.

Poscia ch' ogni mia gioia

Per lo suo dipartire in pianto è volta;

Ogni dolcezza di mia vita è tolta.

H

Amor, tu 'l senti, ond' io teco mi doglio,
Quant' è 'l danno aspro, e grave;
È so che del mio mal ti pesa, e dole;
Anzi del nostro; perch' ad uno scoglio
Avem rotto la nave,
Et in un punto n' è scurato il sole.
Qual ingegno a parole

APPENDIX OF ITALIAN TEXTS 207

Poria aguagliare il mio doglioso stato? Ahi orbo mondo ingrato! Gran cagion hai di dever pianger meco; Che quel bel ch' era in te, perduto hai seco.

III

Caduta è la tua gloria, e tu no 'l vedi;
Nè degno eri mentr' ella
Visse quagiù, d' aver sua conoscenza,
Nè d' esser tócco da' suoi santi piedi:
Perchè cosa sì bella
Devea 'l ciel adornar di sua presenza.
Ma io, lasso! che senza
Lei nè vita mortal nè me stess' amo;
Piangendo la richiamo;
Questo m' avanza di contanta spene,
È questo solo ancor qui mi mantène.

IV

Oimè, terra è fatto il suo bel viso
Che solea far del Cielo
E del ben di lassù fede fra noi.
L' invisibil sua forma è in paradiso
Disciolta di quel velo
Che qui fece ombra al fior degli anni suoi,
Per rivestirsen poi
Un' altra volta, e mai più non spogliarsi;
Quando alma e bella farsi
Tanto più la vedrem, quanto più vale
Sempiterna bellezza che mortale.

V

Più che mai bella è più leggiadra donna
Tornami innanzi come
Là dove più gradir sua vista sente.
Questa è del viver mio l' una colonna;
L' altra è 'l suo chiaro nome.

Che sona nel mio cor sì dolcemente.

Ma tornandomi a mente
Che pur morta è la mia speranza, viva
Allor ch' ella fioriva,
Sa ben Amor, qual io divento, e (spero)
Vede 'l colei ch' è or sì presso al vero.

VI

Donne, voi che miraste sua beltate
E l' angelica vita,
Con quel celeste portamento in terra:
Di me vi doglia e vincavi pietate,
Non di lei, ch' è salita
A tanta pace, e m' ha lasciato in guerra;
Tal, che s' altri mi serra
Lungo tempo il camin da seguitarla,
Quel, ch' amor meco parla,
Sol mi riten, ch' io non recida il nodo:
Ma e ragiona dentro in cotal modo:

VII

Pon freno al gran dolor, che ti trasporta;
Che per soverchie voglie
Si perde 'l cielo, ove 'l tuo core aspira,
Dove è viva colei ch' altrui par morta;
E di sue belle spoglie
Seco sorride, e sol di te sospira;
E sua fama, che spira
In molte parti ancor per la tua lingua,
Prega che non estingua;
Anzi la voce al suo nome rischiari,
Se gli occhi suoi ti fûr dolci, nè cari.

Fuggi 'l sereno, e 'l verde;
Non t' appressar ove sia riso, o canto,
Canzon mia, no, ma pianto:
Non fa per te di star fra gente allegra,
Vedova sconsolata in vesta negra.

APPENDIX OF ITALIAN TEXTS 209

A MESSAGE

Ite, rime dolenti, al duro sasso

Che 'l mio caro tesoro in terra asconde:

Ivi chiamate chi dal Ciel risponde,

Benchè 'l mortal sia in loco oscuro e basso.

Ditele ch' i' son già di viver lasso,

Del navigar per queste orribili onde; Ma ricogliendo le sue sparte fronde, Dietro le vo' pur così passo passo,

Sol di lei ragionando viva e morta,

Anzi pur viva, ed or fatta immortale; A ciò che 'l mondo la conosca ed ame.

Piacciale al mio passar esser accorta;

Ch' è presso omai : siami a l' in contro, e quale

Ella è nel Cielo, a sè mi tiri e chiame.

HER COMPANY

Se lamentar augelli, o verdi fronde Mover soavemente a l' aura estiva, O roco mormorar di lucide onde S' ode d' una fiorita e fresca riva.

S' ode d' una fiorita e fresca riva,
Là 'v' io seggia, d' amor pensoso, e scriva;
Lei che 'l Ciel ne mostrò, terra n' asconde,
Veggio ed odo ed intendo, ch' ancor viva
Di sì lontano a' sospir miei risponde.

Deh perchè inanzi 'l tempo ti consume? Mi dice con pietate: a che pur versi De gli occhi tristi un doloroso fiume?

Di me non pianger tu; ch' e' miei dì fêrsi, Morendo, eterni; e ne l' interno lume, Quando mostrai di chiuder, gli occhi apersi.

HER PILGRIM

S' io avesse pensato, che sì care
Fossin le voci de' sospir miei in rima,
Fatte l' avrei dal sospirar mio prima
In numero più spesse, in stil più rare
Morta colei, che mi facea parlare,

E che si stava de' pensier miei in cima, Non posso, e non ho più sì dolce lima Rime aspre e fosche far soavi e chiare:

E certo ogni mio studio in quel tempo era Pur di sfogare il doloroso core

In qualche modo, non d'acquistar fama:

Pianger cercai, non già del pianto onore. Or vorrei ben piacer: ma quella altera Tacito, stanco, dopo se mi chiama.

HER DOWRY

Conobbi, quanto il ciel gli occhi m' aperse, Quanto studio ed Amor m' alzaron l' ali; Cose nove e leggiadre, ma mortali, Che 'n un soggetto ogni stella cosperse.

L' altre tante sì strane, e sì diverse, Forme altere, celesti, et immortali, Perchè non fûro a l' intelletto eguali, La mia debile vista non sofferse;

Onde quant' io di lei parlai nè scrissi, Ch' or per lodi anzi a Dio preghi mi rende, Fu breve stilla d' infiniti abissi;

Chè stile oltra l' ingegno non si stende; E, per aver uom gli occhi nel Sol fissi, Tanto si vede men, quanto più splende,

HER HOME

Levommi il mio pensier in parte, ov' era Quella, ch' io cerco, e non ritrovo in terra: Îvi fra lor, che 'l terzo cerchio serra, La rividi più bella, e meno altera.

Per man mi prese, e disse: In questa spera Sarai ancor meco, se 'l desir non erra: I' son colei, che ti die' tanta guerra, E compiei mia giornata inanzi sera:

Mio ben non cape in intelletto umano:

Te solo aspetto, e quel che tanto amasti,
E la giuso è rimaso, il mio bel velo.

Deh perché tacque, et allargò la mano? Ch' al suon de' detti sì pietosi e casti Poco mancò, ch' io non rimasi in cielo.

LOST HOPE

Tutta la mia fiorita e verde etade
Passava, e 'ntepidir sentia già 'l foco,
Ch' arse 'l mio cor; et era giunto al loco,
Ove scende la vita, ch' al fin cade:

Già incominciava a prender securtade

La mia cara nemica a poco a poco

De' suoi sospetti, e rivolgeva in gioco

Mie pene acerbe sua dolce onestade:

Presso era 'l tempo dov' Amor si scontra Con Castitate, ed a gli amanti è dato Sedersi insieme, e dir che lor incontra.

Morte ebbe invidia al mio felice stato; Anzi alla speme; e fèglisi all' incontra A mezza via, come nemico armato.

THE NIGHTINGALE

Vago augelletto, che cantando vai, O ver piangendo il tuo tempo passato Vedendoti la notte, e 'l verno a lato, E 'l dì dopo le spalle, e i mesi gai;

Se, come i tuoi gravosi affanni sai,
Così sapessi il mio simile stato;
Verresti in grembo a questo sconsolato
A partir seco i dolorosi guai.

I' non so se le parti sarian pari; Ché quella cui tu piangi è for

Ché quella cui tu piangi è forse in vita; Di ch' a me Morte, e 'l ciel son tanto avari:

Ma la stagione, e l' ora men gradita, Co 'l membrar de' dolci anni, e de li amari, A parlar teco con pietà m' invita.

AT SORGA

Valle, che de' lamenti miei se' piena;
Fiume, che spesso del mio pianger cresci;
Fere selvestre, vaghi augelli, e pesci,
Che l' una e l' altra verde riva affrena;

Aria de' miei sospir calda e serena;

Dolce sentier, che sì amaro riesci;

Colle, che mi piacesti, or mi rincresci, Ov' ancor per usanza Amor mi mena;

Ben riconosco in voi l' usate forme, Non, lasso! in me, che da sì lieta vita Son fatto albergo d' infinita doglia.

Quinci vedea 'l mio bene; e per quest' orme Torno a veder ond' al ciel nuda è gita Lasciando in terra la sua bella spoglia.

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FIRST VISION

Erano i capei d' oro a l' aura sparsi,
Che 'n mille dolci nodi gli avolgea,
E 'l vago lume oltra misura ardea
Di quei begli occhi ch' or ne son sì scarsi;

E 'l viso di pietosi color farsi,

Non so se vero, o falso mi parea: Io che l' esca amorosa al petto avea, Qual meraviglia, se di subit' arsi?

Non era l' andar suo cosa mortale, Ma d' angelica forma; e le parole Sonavan altro, che pur voce umana.

Uno spirto celeste, un vivo sole

Fu quel ch' i' vidi; e se non fosse or tale,

Piaga per allentar d' arco non sana.

GOOD-BYE

Anima bella, da quel nodo sciolta

Che più bel mai non seppe ordir natura,
Pon' dal ciel mente alla mia vita oscura,
Da sì lieti pensieri a pianger volta.

La falsa opinion dal cor s' è tolta,
Che mi fece alcun tempo acerba e dura
Tua dolce vista: omai tutta secura
Volgi a me gli occhi, e i miei sospiri
ascolta.

Mira 'l gran sasso donde Sorga nasce, E vedra 'vi un, che sol tra l' erbe, e l' acque Di tua memoria e di dolor si pasce.

Ove giace 'l tuo albergo, e dove nacque
Il nostro amor, vo' ch' abbandoni, e lasce,
Per non veder ne' tuoi quel ch' a te
spiacque.

THE NOTE IN VIRGIL

The following transcription, which appears to

me the best, is due to de Nolhac:-

Lauren, propriis uirtutibus illustris et meis longum celebrata carminibus, primum oculis meis apparuit sub primum adolescentie mee tempus, anno Domini m' iij xxvij die vj mensis Aprilis in ecclesia sancte Clare Auin. hora matutina; et in cadem civitate codem mense Aprilis codem die sexto cadem ora prima, anno autem mº iije xiviij ab hac luce lux illa subtracta est, cum ego forte tunc Verone essem, heu! fati mei nescius. Rumor autem infelix per literas Ludouici mei me Parme repperit, anno codem mense Maio die xixº mane. Corpus illud castissimum ac pulcerrimum in locum Fratrum Minorum repositum est, ipso die mortis ad uesperam. Animam quidem eius, ut de Africano ait Seneca, in celum, unde erat, rediisse mihi persuadeo. Hec autem ad acerbam rei memoriam amara quadam dulcedine scribere uisum est, hoc potissimum loco qui sepe sub oculis meis redit, ut scilicet cogitem nihil esse debere quod amplius mihi placeat in hac uita et, effracto maiori laqueo, tempus esse de Babilone fugiendi crebra horum inspectione ac fugacissime etatis existimatione conmonear, quod, preuia Dei gratia, facile erit preteriti temporis curas superuacuas spes inanes et inexpectatos exitus acriter ac uiriliter cogitanti.

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